CONDUCTING CULTURE: LEONARD BERNSTEIN, THE ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, AND THE NEGOTIATION OF JEWISH AMERICAN IDENTITY, 1947-1967

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Abstract

Leonard Bernstein's relationship to his Jewish identity—his determination to nourish and sustain it—was one of the single most important aspects not only of his musical career, but also of his greater character. Throughout his life, his deep concern for his own Jewishness manifested as a persistent commitment to certain organizations. One of the most prominent of these was the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, originally known as the Palestine Symphony Orchestra. This dissertation is a contribution to our knowledge of Bernstein's work in Israel and explains the significance of his relationship to the Israel Philharmonic between the years of 1947 to 1967, chronologically exploring milestones that saw the benefit and evolution of both parties.

Bernstein stood by the orchestra during Israel's pre-statehood battles, the War of Independence, and the resultant conflicts with the United Nations; he attracted prominent musical associates to the cause, such as his mentor, Serge Koussevitzky. He helped the orchestra to raise the necessary funds for their first international tour in America, leading them in that venture. Through the years, he lobbied for a permanent home for the orchestra, and when their dream was finally realized, he traveled to Tel Aviv in 1957 to lead the dedication concert. When Israel prevailed in the Six-Day War in 1967, he proclaimed the victory from a mountaintop in dramatic fashion in the historic Mount Scopus concert on 9 July 1967. For their own part, the orchestra was there to witness Bernstein's rise to prominence. They celebrated his early victories as a composer by performing both of his first two symphonies; in 1963, they premiered Bernstein's third

and final symphony, *Kaddish*, in Jerusalem: a deeply personal work that touched upon their mutual traumas at the hands of the Holocaust—with the composer at the podium.

Although the collaboration between Bernstein and the orchestra has been the subject of great romanticism, this document demonstrates that the story of their partnership is far more complicated than it appears on the surface. Despite the difficulties of personality and circumstance that arose between the two parties, however, they remained dedicated to each other. While Bernstein's energies were primarily directed at the advancement of his career in the United States, he retained his relationship to the Israel Philharmonic as a major priority throughout his rise to prominence and beyond.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this project would never have been possible without the generous support of a number of individuals. Firstly, I would like to thank my committee members as a whole for the care and attention they have placed into reading this document and offering their individual insights. Most of all, I extend my sincerest gratitude to my adviser, Paul Laird, for the numerous hours he has spent patiently re-reading this text and discussing the concepts and details presented therein. His exhaustive knowledge of Bernstein's personality and career has enriched my dissertation to a degree that otherwise would have been impossible, and his devoted mentoring and belief in my abilities provided me with an ongoing source of strength not only throughout this project, but even more, the whole of my doctoral career. I also wish to individually extend my thanks to Alicia Levin for offering her perspective; Roberta Schwartz for her dedicated support throughout this process; Scott Murphy for taking a considerable amount of time to assist me in my theoretical understanding of Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*; and Sherrie Tucker, for generously offered her expertise in American Studies and providing another valuable angle from which to consider this project. Lastly, I wish to thank each of the faculty at the University of Kansas with whom I have had the pleasure of working throughout my graduate career. Each of them has contributed to my scholarly development and inspired me in various ways to better myself both academically and personally.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to Mark Horowitz at the Library of Congress for his patient and gracious assistance with my research endeavors in the Leonard

Bernstein Collection. Likewise, I want to thank Avivit Hochstadter of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Archives for the many hours she devoted in allowing me to work within their collection. I also wish to recognize Yaacov Mishori, principal hornist of the Israel Philharmonic, for the memorable afternoon we spent together discussing Bernstein's later work with the orchestra. Although his insights ultimately fell outside of the scope of my project, he offered an invaluable glimpse into the special relationship Bernstein shared with the orchestra and its members, both professionally and personally.

Finally, I wish to thank all of my friends and family, especially my grandparents, Nicholas and Parthena; my aunt and uncle Kim and Khodr; my sisters, Miri and Angela; and most of all, my parents, John and Pamela. All of you have accompanied me with patience and love on this journey, each in your own way. More than anyone, you have made my success possible, and I am truly blessed to have had your tireless support over the years. Each of you forms an essential part of me; your souls touch everything I have written. I dedicate the pages that follow to you.

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Introduction

"*…like many American Jews, he practiced Judaism lite, but inhabited it as though it were body armor. At the same time he was always tweaking the norms of Jewish conduct as if those boundaries could not contain him. Inside that enclosure he often pushed against the pillars, and at times, like the Biblical Samson, part of the structure would come crashing down.*"

- Jack Gottlieb, *Working with Bernstein* (2010)

In the spring of 1951, Leonard Bernstein, not yet thirty-three years old, gave a speech at a benefit for the American Fund for Israel. His relationship with the organization was long-standing, dating back to the days when they had called themselves the American Fund for Palestine. The group had largely bankrolled the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's recently concluded tour of the United States—their first—an endeavor in which Bernstein had also played a critical role. With the tour and the fundraiser behind him, Bernstein slipped off to Mexico for some sun and what he hoped would be a productive compositional sabbatical. Since the beginning of his career, Bernstein had always felt a sense of obligation derived from his Judaism: not only a duty to his people and to the Bernstein name, but an indescribable need to nurture this integral part of himself. Now, as his stature continued to increase, that sense of responsibility weighed more heavily than ever upon his shoulders, as revealed in a letter he penned to his secretary Helen Coates from Cuernavaca: "I want a little rest from being a professional Jew; I would love to be, for a while at least, just a human being."[1]

Bernstein, of course, could no more have turned away from his Jewishness than he could have his musical career. Other conductors, such as Bernstein's respected

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[1] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 19 April 1951, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection Online, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/bernstein/>, accessed 1 February 2015. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

mentor, Serge Koussevitzky, had made the early decision to convert, to distance themselves from the fold. Bernstein, conversely, famously declared in response to Koussevitzky's suggestion that he change his name to Leonard S. Burns that he had "decided to make it as Leonard Bernstein or not at all."[2] As the first American conductor to achieve prominence on the international scene, his talents, vivacious youthfulness, and charm were ultimately of far more importance to the public than his religious and cultural affiliations. Nonetheless, Bernstein was anything but a closet Jew; his lifelong associations with Jewish causes and organizations are extensive and well documented.

In researching my master's thesis on Bernstein's brief tenure as a visiting professor at Brandeis University—a position he happily occupied during some of the busiest years of his life—I came to realize the significance of Bernstein's commitment to both his Jewishness and to service as an educator in his field.[3] The latter was in no small way connected to the former; in Bernstein's mind, education was of primary significance to his life as a Jew. A descendant of rabbis, he learned from an early age not only to take his own studies seriously, but also to use his gifts to aid in the education of others—starting with his childhood friends and family, as explored in the first chapter of this text.

Like Brandeis, the Israel Philharmonic was another prominent Jewish organization with which Bernstein bonded deeply; unlike Brandeis, however, the orchestra was itself based far outside of his life as America's musical darling. What was it that drew him to Israel? How did his work there help him to better define his own identity as an assimilated American Jew? What complex emotions gave birth to his

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[2] Stephen J. Whitfield, *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 57.
[3] Erica K. Argyropoulos, "Bernstein at Brandeis: A Study of Leonard Bernstein's Collaboration with Brandeis University, 1951-1955," (M.A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 2005).

yearning to search for—and ultimately, to discover and bond with—a part of himself so far away from the life to which he had grown accustomed in the United States? These are difficult questions that, owing to their importance in Bernstein's life and career endeavors, merit answers. Although Bernstein's activities in Israel have been sparsely documented in other sources, a more complete record of this hitherto neglected portion of Bernstein's biography—an explanation of its importance in his life—is presented here for the first time in detail. While at times his relationship with the orchestra's administrators was a difficult one, the events in his life to which the partnership gave rise were emotionally potent and left a deep impression on him, beginning with his initial visit to Israel at the age of twenty-nine.

For the sake of this document, I chose to narrow my focus primarily to the years prior to Bernstein's appointment as music director of the New York Philharmonic, a post which severely restricted his guest conducting activities; the final chapter and conclusion, however, do provide insight into important milestones with the Israel Philharmonic that occurred during his tenure in New York, attesting to the depth of his commitment to the organization. Only after Bernstein left this position did he more fully devote himself again to his work in Israel, and although time and resources prohibited me from exhaustively analyzing the details of the post-New York Philharmonic years, they indeed merit further attention. The early years of Bernstein's travels to Israel, however, are highly significant not only due to the timing of key historic events in the shaping of the nation, but also in regard to their importance in the development of Bernstein's personal and professional life.

In examining Bernstein's first journey to Israel in 1947, as described in Chapter Two, one senses a great deal of ambivalence on the part of the young composer-conductor in reconciling the position Israel would come to hold—in his professional life, but even more importantly, in the political, spiritual, and even moral framework of his existence. As the years progressed, the Israel Philharmonic was to cement itself firmly in Bernstein's biography as one of only a few orchestras with which he established a meaningful, lifelong bond. Aside from the New York Philharmonic, Bernstein arguably devoted more of his time to the organization than any other; he even composed his third symphony, as explained in Chapter Four, with an Israeli audience specifically in mind. Nonetheless, he appears to have never reconciled his doubts concerning the direction of Israeli governmental policy. He expressed them subtly in criticizing the national ban on Wagner (see Chapter Three), and perhaps less delicately in his later years, as explained in the conclusion of this document. Nonetheless, Bernstein remained one of Israel's strongest advocates in the musical world of the United States. He proved a potent propagandist in generating support for the Israeli cause in America. For an orchestra that viewed itself—and rightly so—as an indispensible diplomatic arm of the Jewish state, Leonard Bernstein remained a significant resource in the arena of public relations.

Literature Review

The sources most relevant in compiling this document fall into several categories, according to topic and medium. The first of these relates to issues surrounding identity, Judaica, Israel, and Zionism in the greater sense. *Boundaries of Jewish Identity*, edited by Susan A. Glenn and Naomi B. Sokoloff, presents a series of essays that explores Jewishness through a collection of focused articles that shed light on issues pertaining to conversion in Judaism, Jewish identity in Eastern Europe, Jewishness in America, and boundaries of Jewishness seen through the lens of citizenship law in Israel.[4] The essays grant insight into both the constraints of Jewish identity and the modern-day evolution and redefining of these limits. *American Jewish Identity Politics*, edited by Deborah Dash Moore, includes articles concerned with Judaism *vis-à-vis* various American political factors.[5] The essays regarding the shaping of Jewishness in the United States in the aftermath of the Holocaust and World War II were particularly enlightening, as this was a seminal period in Bernstein's personal and musical development.

More than any other book on Jewish identity, the rich narrative of Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias's *The Jew and the Other* was invaluable in understanding Bernstein's plight as a Jew just as a new wave of assimilation was beginning to take hold in the United States.[6] The product of this assimilation, the "New Jew," is a concept that appears throughout recent literature pertaining to Jewish studies;

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[4] Susan A. Glenn and Naomi B. Sokoloff, eds., *Boundaries of Jewish Identity* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2010).
[5] Deborah Dash Moore, ed., *American Jewish Identity Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008).
[6] Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias*, The Jew and the Other* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2004).

my own conception of the term and what it meant for Bernstein was significantly enriched by Benbassa and Attias's penetrating analysis of the Jew's position in the modern world and how his or her interaction with that world is essential to identity formation. The concept of the New Jew is one that will be illuminated in the first chapter and further expanded in the second; implicitly, it remains integral throughout the entirety of the document.

Several historic texts provided insight into the pre-statehood years of the Zionist movement. Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (1896), arguably the most important early work on the subject, lays out the tenants of Zionism and argues for the pressing need for a Jewish homeland.[7] Alan Dowty and Asher Ginzberg's indispensable article "Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael,' Zionism, and the Arabs" provides the first complete published English translation of a little-known essay penned by the prominent Zionist in 1891: an important early source concerning the Arab-Jewish conflict and the ethical challenges posed by establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[8] Another interesting insight into pre-war stances on Zionism comes to light through Albert Einstein's *About Zionism: Speeches and Letters* (1931), a collection of writings on topics such as assimilation and nationalism, the Jews in Palestine, and the Jewish-Arab conflict.[9]

Two volumes were particularly invaluable in understanding the symbiotic relationship between American and Israeli Jewry by way of the Zionist movement.

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[7] Theodor Herzl, *The Jews' State: A Critical English Translation,* translation and introduction by Henk Overberg (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997).
[8] Alan Dowty, Ahad Ha'am, and Asher Ginzberg, "Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael,' Zionism, and the Arabs," *Israel Studies* 5:2 (Fall 2000), 154-181.
[9] Albert Einstein, *About Zionism: Speeches and Letters*, translated and edited by Leon Simon (New York: MacMillan, 1931).

Naomi W. Cohen's *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* presents a history of Zionism in America from the resonances of Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* through the Six-Day War in 1967.[10] Though not a comprehensive history, owing to its publication in 1975, it explores the period most relevant to the first two decades of Bernstein's involvement with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. *The Jews of Boston*, edited by Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith, presents essays that explore not only Zionism in Boston but also lend a rich historical landscape to Boston Jewry, the culture of which was absolutely vital to nourishing the young Bernstein's conception of Jewishness.[11] Walter Lacquer's *A History of Zionism* offers one of the most comprehensive histories of Zionism, from Herzl's predecessors to the advent of the Jewish State.[12]

Several volumes helped to establish a contextual history of modern Israel through which to frame this study. *The Jewish National Home*, edited by Paul Goodman, presents a collection of writings pertaining to the early history of Israel, most notably relating to the origins, significance, and impact of the Balfour Declaration, the letter which set the wheels in motion for a Jewish homeland.[13] Joseph Heller's *The Birth of Israel, 1945-1949: Ben-Gurion and His Critics* offers a political history of early Israel, beginning just two years prior to statehood.[14] Ilan Pappe's *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge* is significant for its insights on Israel's place in the academy and the influence of changing political tides on academic thought.[15] Colin Shindler's *A History of*

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[10] Naomi W. Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1975).
[11] Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith, eds., *The Jews of Boston* (Boston, MA: The Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, 1995).
[12] Walter Lacquer, *A History of Zionism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972).
[13] Paul Goodman, ed., *The Jewish National Home* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1943).
[14] Joseph Heller, *The Birth of Israel, 1945-1949, Ben-Gurion and His Critics* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000).
[15] Ilan Pappe, *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge* (London: Verso, 2014).

Modern Israel[16] and Howard M. Sachar's exhaustive *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*[17] provide comprehensive histories of modern-day Israel.

There are a multitude of sources on the life of Leonard Bernstein. Perhaps one of the most important is Paul Laird's *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research*, which extensively catalogs Bernstein's own writings, as well as sources pertaining to his compositions and career pursuits as a conductor and educator.[18] Also vital to this study is Humphrey Burton's *Leonard Bernstein*, easily the most comprehensive biography on the composer to date.[19] In addition to telling the story of Bernstein's life and granting penetrating insight into his personality, the volume places general details of his pursuits in Israel into the context of his greater life and comprises the most thorough overall record of the dates and circumstances of his trips there. Meryle Secrest's *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* is another general biography of significance to this study, particularly in regard to the useful details it provides on Bernstein's family history, his Jewish upbringing, and the importance of Judaism in his life.[20] Another significant biography is by Peter Gradenwitz, a German-born music scholar who resided in Israel and has written on the musical life there. *Leonard Bernstein: The Infinite Variety of A Musician* is peppered with potent accounts of Bernstein's travels to Israel, particularly during the early years of political strife.[21]

A number of more specific and personal works were useful in coming to understand Bernstein's biography from the perspective of his Jewishness. *Leonard*

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[16] Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge, 2013).
[17] Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
[18] Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
[19] Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).
[20] Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).
[21] Peter Gradenwitz, *Leonard Bernstein: The Infinite Variety of a Musician* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

Bernstein: The Harvard Years, edited by Claudia Swan, includes essays that provide important information concerning Bernstein's activities at Harvard, with some attention also given to a little-known period in his life: his time as a student at the prestigious Boston Latin School, which played a formative role in his development.[22] Barry Seldes's *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* is a detailed biography on the musician from the standpoint of his politics, and provides an important context for his activities in Israel within the narrative of his greater political life.[23] Seldes addresses Bernstein's Zionist leanings, but also counters the notion that Bernstein held strictly to these sympathies throughout the whole of his life, covering, for example, a pro-Palestinian petition to which Bernstein lent his signature in 1979.[24]

Important personal accounts of Bernstein's life—particularly in regard to his Jewishness—were significant to this study, especially the first chapter. Jack Gottlieb's *Working with Bernstein* conveys the importance of Judaism in the life of the composer,[25] even providing an inventory in the introduction of the ways in which he adhered more strictly to Jewish convention and the personal conflicts that arose from his position as an assimilated, secularized Jewish American.[26] As Bernstein's personal assistant for a number of years and a Jewish composer himself, Gottlieb was uniquely situated to observe the impact—even the struggles—presented by the composer-conductor's dedication to both the Jewish faith and its culture. Burton Bernstein, Leonard's youngest brother, also offers considerable insights in this area, particularly in regard to the

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[22] Claudia Swann, ed., *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999).
[23] Barry Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009).
[24] Ibid., 157.
[25] Jack Gottlieb, *Working with Bernstein* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2010).
[26] Ibid., 10-11.

Bernstein family history, in his memoir *Family Matters: Sam, Jennie, and the Kids*.[27] Burton's vivid accounts of how he and his siblings clashed with his parents' more antiquated values are more than the story of growing pains; rather, they provide first-hand insight into the process of assimilation the younger generation of Bernsteins underwent throughout their respective childhoods. Sometimes, devotion to "family" almost seems analogous to adherence to traditional Jewish values and norms:

> Perhaps Lenny, Shirley and I were educated too much and grew too worldly. We patronized and ridiculed our less educated, less worldly parents. We had it too easy. It's a common enough American experience with offspring of immigrants. But throughout our guilt-ridden discomfort with our parents, arrogant derision of them, and our final acceptance of them, there was always love…The family was the family, after all. Like it or not, we are the living aggregates of all those old genes and acquired characteristics.[28]

Indeed, throughout the unfolding of Burton's recollections, it seems clear that this is just as much the story of Leonard, Shirley, and himself reconciling the mandates imposed upon their lives by Jewish tradition with the American, assimilated—or as Burton puts it, "worldly"—part of their beings. As such, it was easily the most important source for gleaning insight into the shaping and ultimate direction of Bernstein's Jewish identity.

Another source of significance in defining Bernstein's Jewish roots is the February 2009 special issue of the *Journal of the Society for American Music* titled "Leonard Bernstein in Boston."[29] The collection of articles stems from the 2006 conference and festival, "Leonard Bernstein, Boston to Broadway: Concerts and Symposia at Harvard University," a richly informative event that explored Bernstein's history at the institution and Boston roots, among other topics. Of particular note for the

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[27] Burton Bernstein, *Family Matters: Sam, Jennie, and the Kids* (New York: Summit Books, 1982).
[28] Ibid., 200.
[29] "Special Issue 01: Leonard Bernstein in Boston," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 3:1 (February 2009).

sake of this study was Jonathan Sarna's contribution, "Leonard Bernstein and the Boston Community of His Youth: The Influence of Solomon Braslavsky, Herman Rubenovitz, and Congregation Mishkan Tefila," which explores the importance of Bernstein's childhood synagogue and the impact of its musicians and musical life upon his eventual career.[30]

Of profound influence on the arguments of the fourth chapter, which concerns Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*, is David M. Schiller's *Bloch, Schoenberg and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music*. The volume examines a work by each of the three composers—Ernest Bloch's *Sacred Service*, Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*, and Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*—as musical representations of assimilation. The explanation of each composition contains considerable musical analysis; more than that, however, Schiller places the works into a socio-cultural context that informs his analyses. Viewed side by side, his arguments concerning *A Survivor from Warsaw* and *Kaddish* drew attention all the more to the conceptual similarities of the two works.

Leonard Bernstein's *Findings*, a compilation of letters, essays, and other miscellaneous writings dating back to his childhood, was also a significant source.[31] In addition to containing Bernstein's Harvard thesis, which provides significant insights into his later thinking concerning Israel, *Findings* also includes a recreation of a dialogue between Bernstein and a cabin mate during his first voyage to Tel Aviv via ocean liner,

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[30] Jonathan Sarna "Leonard Bernstein and the Boston Community of His Youth The Influence of Solomon Braslavsky, Herman Rubenovitz, and Congregation Mishkan Tefila," *Journal of the Society for American Music* (Special Issue 01: "Bernstein in Boston") 3:1 (February 2009), 35-46.
[31] Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

betraying the composer's ambivalent feelings toward the political realities of lending his support to Israel.

The contents of the Leonard Bernstein Collection were of foremost importance to crafting this document. The collection contains numerous writings, transcripts, musical sketches, notes, and correspondence that were useful not only in gaining insight into Bernstein's inner thought processes and the dynamics of his personal and business relationships, but also in constructing a timeline of events. Specifically within the archives, the Amberson Business Papers contain a wealth of documents concerned with Bernstein's work with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and his relationships with orchestra officials. Equally important are the Israel Philharmonic Archives in Tel Aviv, which houses documents, press releases, clippings, and correspondence relating to orchestra operations and, more specifically, to Bernstein's significant relationship with the organization. The collection of programs contained in the archives dates back to their first concert as the Palestine Symphony Orchestra in December 1936. In spending significant time in both of these facilities—informed by the contextual framework provided by the preceding literature—a story began to emerge concerning Bernstein's complicated and emotionally charged relationship with the Israel Philharmonic, told in the pages that follow.

Chapter One: Quests for Identity

"…untold other Jews [have undergone] the wrenching experience of integration or assimilation—of full-fledged entry into the other's world, which, however, never stops rejecting them, despite all their efforts to resemble the other as closely as they can."

"The others trace the cultural frontiers of the people of Israel, and the borderline they draw both singularizes the Israelites and rivets them to this foreign soil. It creates the solidarity that is indispensable for people of a movement; the looks exchanged between them and the others contribute to their self-understanding."

- Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias, *The Jew and the Other* (2004)

THERE IS SOMETHING. WHAT?

Enough?=
Hanukah candles?
Seder?
Hi-Ho seats?

2,3,4 generations?
What makes it want to
continue? What is "it"?
Is the Talmud even relevant?
Why is it worth a Holocaust?
If indeed it is - - -
Is anything worth a Holocaust?
NO.

Trying to assimilate
To be balanced-at rest-
-stable-in a goy society
[without relying too much on
"Judaistic" principles-What
are they? Abraham? Moses?
Ghetto-traditional?
Is Grossinger's enough
[illegible]
UJA?[1]

[1] Leonard Bernstein, "There is Something. What?" n.d., Box 31, Folder 9, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. This poem is also referenced in Jack Gottlieb, *Working with Bernstein* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2010), 9.

On an undated musical sketch buried amongst a trove of pages that bring to life the compositional process of one of America's most beloved musical figures, Leonard Bernstein scribbled the above lines with a hurried hand. Spontaneous and apparently an effort of stream-of-consciousness poeticism, the verses are anything but simple ruminations. Raw but existentially profound, the short poem reveals questions that would stand to illuminate Bernstein's concept of himself, his cultural identity, and his understanding of both his otherness as a Jew and his non-Jewish other. His lifelong struggle to negotiate these abstract concepts fueled his creativity as a composer, informed his preferences as a conductor, and led him across the world in 1947 to Palestine, a historic land that held mysteries both foreign and intrinsically familiar. Bernstein's experiences in what was shortly to become the state of Israel would come to enlighten and shape his Jewishness, to allow him to interact with it.

This understanding—the forging of a deep respect and relationship with this part of himself, as well as Bernstein negotiating his position in relation to the non-Jewish other—both complements and intersects with the story of Israel. This new state, born of conflicts and persecution spanning the ages and comprised of immigrants from nations across the world, would be faced with many questions. Israel would need to reckon not only with asserting her identity, she would first need to forge that identity from the disparate realms of thousands of years of history and an unavoidable superficiality necessitated by the need to establish autonomy immediately and decisively. Grappling with defining this nation-state under a cloud of unrest, firm in their quest for legitimacy on a divided world stage, the leaders of Israel would have an immense amount of work ahead in establishing a viable, recognized state. If the nations of the world were

unconvinced, Israel would have to convince them, not only by military might, but more importantly, by crafting a collective national and cultural identity that would leave no room for doubt of Israel as an autonomous entity. But what did it mean to be Israeli? What was a "Jewish state"? What did it mean to be a Jew living in Israel, particularly after centuries of diaspora? At few other times in history were such questions thrust so pressingly upon a budding nation's founders and political powers.

One way the Israeli political machine sought to tackle these complex issues was to reach out to its fellow nations in a way with which they could identify. In the quest to create a cultural organization that would stand as a triumphant symbol of Israeli success on a world stage, the Palestine Symphony—later renamed the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra—was born. And here, the stories of Bernstein's personal search for himself and a young nation struggling to understand itself and to be understood intersect. Bernstein took on an active role in creating an Israeli orchestra—a Jewish orchestra—that would set itself apart but nonetheless adhere to the aesthetic sensibilities of the West. This was an orchestra comprised of Holocaust survivors and Jewish diasporic youth, playing the music born of the European cultural establishment the Jew had played a fundamental role in constructing and of which he had been both curious and suspicious: eager to assimilate but even more eager to remain as other. Bernstein himself shared many of these feelings. Unwilling to leave behind America, he would be occupationally and spiritually tied to Israel for the remainder of his life, drawn back to her time and again even as he saw his own star rise at home. Indeed, Israel's struggle to create and assert her identity on the concert stage and Bernstein's need to do the same are two stories that are both metaphorically similar and in places, entirely interwoven.

Leonard Bernstein, America's Foremost "Jewish Musician"

The angst Bernstein faced in reconciling his relationship to his Jewishness, which crept into his awareness during his formative years at the Boston Latin School and began to swell throughout his experiences at Harvard—a university that had even appointed a committee to study the University's "Jewish problem" in 1922—reached the level of a personal crisis by the time of World War II and especially in the years that followed.[2] As the rest of the world stood aghast at the grotesquely systematic nature and scope of the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime, Bernstein was left to question both the foundations of his Jewishness and to contemplate his inevitable future struggles as a Jewish American, reflected in the previously quoted verses, perhaps penned following the war.[3]

In questioning the legitimacy of long-held traditions and multi-generational history as a basis for persevering in the face of genocidal persecution, "There is something. What?" exhibits a self-antagonistic phenomenon that Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias have described as central to the modern Jewish experience in their remarkably insightful study, *The Jew and the Other*:

> Self-hatred is a product of modernity. The modern Jew was forced to choose. He had to pick his way among the multiple identities offered to him in a configuration quite different from the one that had prevailed earlier, when he was firmly bound to his group. His contacts with the outside world were no longer governed by a limited number of strictly codified rules, while his relation to his

[2] "Harvard's Jewish Problem," Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/anti-semitism/harvard.html>, accessed 8 November 2013.
[3] The raw emotional energy that underlies the text and the appropriation of the term "Holocaust" seem to indicate that the work dates from the years directly following the Second World War.

> own Judaism was no longer dictated by fidelity to a genealogy that he might earlier have considered immutable because of his beliefs.[4]

Indeed, Bernstein's interrogative concerning the relevance of the Talmud was a direct affront to one of the most prominent markers of Jewishness within the household of his youth; his father Sam—the Ukrainian son of a rabbi and Talmudic scholar—had studied the text avidly throughout his life and considered the work a benchmark for both ethical and intellectual matters alike. In a 1935 essay, Bernstein had noted that his father viewed the Talmud as the foundation of his life and philosophy:

> His life textbook is the TALMUD. It has been so from his earliest childhood, and he has known no other teacher…If he is called upon to speak, his discourse invariably begins with a quotation from the TALMUD. Nor does he omit it from casual conversation. It is his unfailing source of reference. He lives according to its principles, and it hurts him to see that others do not.[5]

The implied sense of underlying friction in the father/son relationship, if not passive hostility, seems notable when viewed in the context of Bernstein's well-documented complaints that his father's constant deference to the Talmud was one of his greatest faults.[6] As he emphasizes the word Talmud in capitalized block letters upon each use of the word, one might surmise that the young Bernstein inferred an air of sanctimony from his father's continual allusions to the work. A self-made immigrant who was likewise eager to join the first Conservative synagogue in Boston, Sam was certainly a "modern man" in his day; his son, however, represents the "modern Jew" of which Benbassa and Attias have written. While Sam had found it unthinkable to question his Talmudic roots, his son was already eager to distance himself from the *ab antiquo* ethical and social

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[4] Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias*, The Jew and the Other* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2004), 131.
[5] Leonard Bernstein, "Father's Books," 11 February 1935, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 69, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[6] Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 16.

considerations of his father's generation, for whom the Talmud had long been a guide. As a man perhaps in his late 20s or early 30s, Bernstein had gone a step further in the previously referenced poem, calling into question its very pertinence in the postwar era.

Benbassa and Attias further describe this generational clash,[7] a twentieth-century archetype of the Jew's inner conflict between the traditionalism germane to the historical lineage of Judaism and the cultural edicts of assimilation of the so-called "New Jew":[8]

> As soon as he came into existence, the modern Jew had to find a way of managing the conflict that pitted his traditional self against a self eager for change. By force of circumstance, a transition was made from the "we" to the "I," from membership in a collectivity to individual self-affirmation…Autobiography, a genre that blossomed with the advent of individualism, now made its appearance. It retraced the wrenching experiences of the Jews who confronted modernity and, amid nostalgia for the past and a sense of guilt, contemplated abandoning the world from which they had come.[9]

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[7] For more on generational conflicts, see Allen Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

[8] For the purpose of this study, the term "New Jew" will generally be appropriated to represent the concept of Benbassa and Attias's "modern Jew": that is to say, the Jew who increasingly has had to reckon with issues of identity related to the new assimilation of the modern era. The concept has been codified in studies such as Nathan Abrams' recently published work, *The New Jew in Film: Exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 2012). In exploring over 300 films, Abrams explains a notable upsurge in the diversity of Jewish representation in film by the late twentieth-century, owing to the higher degree of assimilation afforded to the modern Jew. Therein he expresses "[his] concern to reveal how the representation of the Jew is used to convey confidence or anxieties about Jewish identity and history as well as questions of racial, sexual, and gender politics." Additionally, the term has been used in scholarship to signify a "new" Israeli Jew who has been freed from the constraints of residing in diasporic minorities, as is the case in Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diasposa* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005). Bernstein himself referenced this phenomenon, using these very words (see Chapter Two).

[9] Benbassa and Attias, 132. According to Marcus Moseley: "Only in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did works of Jewish East European provenance more clearly approximate the categories of autobiography and memoir, as these genres are understood today. The most significant texts that appeared on the threshold of the modern era in that region are, in chronological order of composition: the memoirs (posthumously entitled as such) of Ber of Bolechów (also known as Birkenthal), written in Hebrew circa 1790–1800, first published in 1922; Salomon Maimon's *Lebensgeschichte,* written in German and published in two volumes in 1792–1793; Mosheh Wassercug's memoirs, written in Hebrew probably in the second decade of the nineteenth century and not published until 1911; Natan Sternhartz of Nemirov's *Yeme Moharnat,* written in Hebrew and completed circa 1835, first published in 1876." For a more complete account of this history, please see Marcus Moseley, "Autobiography and Memoir," *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Autobiography_and_ Memoir>, accessed 16 November 2013.

Bernstein's struggle to negotiate between his desire to assimilate and to retain Jewish autonomy is at the heart of the latter portion of the poem "There is Something. What?"; again, he directly contrasts the "Judaistic principles" of old (including his biting reference to the "tradition" of the Jewish ghetto, an institution as old as Christian Europe itself that grew more sinister still in its associations within the context of Nazism) and the cultural landmarks of the modern assimilated Jew, who was now afforded the opportunity to take part in the customs of his non-Jewish counterpart by joining an advocacy group such as the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) or vacationing at Grossinger's, a summer resort in the Catskill Mountains that had opened its doors to the Jewish faction of America's *nouveau riche*, a group among whom the Bernsteins could certainly count themselves as members.

However one chooses to interpret the specifics of the poem, the idea of negotiating between assimilation and cultural integration is perhaps the most prominent; this was certainly to remain a theme in Bernstein's life, well beyond the years directly following the war. The roots of the inner conflict that motivated him to write the text can be traced to his childhood, and even earlier, as his parents struggled likewise to negotiate just how far their Jewishness would be permitted to extend into their everyday lives, and later, into the lives of their first-generation American children.

"In the beginning was the note, and the note was with God": The Roots of Identity, 1918-1947

Speaking toward a camera near the end of his life, Bernstein made plain his sense that music and spirituality were intimately linked; that the composer is an instrument by which the Divine takes on human expression:

> In the beginning was the note,
> And the note was with God.
> And whosoever can reach that note,
> Reach high and bring it back to us on earth,
> To our earthly ears,
> He is a composer,
> And to the extent of his reach
> Partakes of the Divine.[10]

The sense of identity Bernstein derived from his religious upbringing would take on a primary role in his musical life: not only in the subject matter of his compositions, but also as a guiding force in his greater decisions. Indeed, Bernstein's concept of himself as a musical representative of Judaism on the world stage informed a great number of his career endeavors, including his deep commitment to education, the composers with whom he formed associations as a conductor, and his lifelong affiliation with prominent Jewish institutions: most notably, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Any discussion of the role that Bernstein's Jewishness played in his biography must begin with an examination of the background of his parents, and particularly that of his domineering father. Samuel Joseph Bernstein—born as Shmuel Yosef on 5 January

[10] "Leonard Bernstein: Reaching for the Note," Written and Directed by Susan Lacy, *American Masters*, New York: Educational Broadcasting Corp., 1998.

1892 in a *shtetl* near Berezdov, present-day Ukraine[11]—was the son of a Hasidic, ultra-Orthodox rabbi-scholar named Yudel and an industrious, practical-minded mother, Dinah (*née* Malamud).[12] Yudel's own father, a courageous blacksmith of some local renown, had died when he was only twelve. According to Burton Bernstein, Leonard's youngest sibling,

> [Yudel] studied diligently and passionately at the local yeshiva,[13] wrapped himself for protection in Hasidism, Talmud, and Torah…he cultivated a beard and long sidelocks. He wore a black caftan and a fur hat—the uniform of the ultra-Orthodox. He knew and cared little for the world beyond the walls of his room, the yeshiva, and the synagogue.[14]

Life in the household of Rabbi Yehuda, as he was known to his congregation, was anything but easy. By Burton Bernstein's account,

> the Orthodox Hasidic religion that they followed covered Shmuel Yosef's youth like a heavy garment, both protective and suffocating. Judaism entered into every cranny of daily life: no question was too small to be answered by one religious dictum or another; no rite was too inconsequential to be observed and mulled over; no sin against God, some of them more local lore than Mosaic law, was too trifling to go unpunished. (My father once told me that he had received a sharp beating at the hands of Yudel for allowing his skullcap to slip off his head during an evening prayer.) And it hardly escaped Shmuel Yosef's notice that his pervading Jewishness was the source of his inferiority and poverty in that inhospitable land.[15]

One can imagine that from an early age Sam had dreamed of the day he could make his escape from the oppressively anti-Semitic environment of the *shtetl*, where life had

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[11] Originating in the Middle Ages, the *shtetl* was a small Jewish collective based in Central or Eastern Europe.
[12] Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 6.
[13] A yeshiva is a secondary school with a heavy emphasis on the study of the Torah and Talmud. In the age of Yudel's youth in the Ukraine, the yeshiva would have been strictly male and attended until one was old enough to marry.
[14] Burton Bernstein, *Family Matters: Sam, Jennie, and the Kids* (New York: Summit Books, 1982), 20.
[15] Ibid., 24. According to Secrest, even after emigrating to the United States, Dinah refused to enter any home without a *mezuzah*—a Jewish symbol indicating God's protection and consecration—affixed to the entrance.

devolved all the more brutally under tsarist rule.[16] When he was only sixteen and without the knowledge of his parents, Sam made a harrowing journey across Poland, to Liverpool by way of Danzig, and eventually as a steerage passenger on a vessel bound to New York.[17] There, his uncle Herschel Malamud was waiting; he would provide Sam with financial assistance and eventually, his first quality job at a barbershop.[18]

Sam met Charna "Jennie" Resnick in 1916; the two married the very next year. Born on 20 March 1898 in the Jewish ghetto of Shepetovka, Poland, Jennie had likewise been raised by Ukrainian parents Simcha and Perel "Pearl" (née Zorfas) Resnick. Arriving in Poland in 1893, the religiously observant couple were nonetheless far less devout than the parents of Sam Bernstein, and favored leisurely pursuits such as "tasty food, music, dancing, and the company of friends," according to Burton.[19] Although slightly less precarious than the repressive *shtetl* of Sam's youth, Shepetovka was far from a paradise for its Jewish citizens, and Jennie had been warned strictly against traveling by way of the streets utilized by the predominantly Gentile population.[20] Alongside her mother, Jennie made the difficult journey to Ellis Island when she was only seven years old.[21]

Despite the commonalities in their backgrounds, the marriage between Sam and Jennie was marred by those traits that they did not share. Studious but warm, Sam prided himself as a lifelong student of the Talmud and an attentive businessman; he founded the Samuel Bernstein Hair Company in 1923, which succeeded during the Depression era

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[16] For more on the history of the *shtetl*, consult Jeffrey Shandler, *The Shtetl: A Vernacular Intellectual History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).
[17] Bernstein, 28.
[18] Burton, 5. Initially, Sam had cleaned fish at the Fulton Market, which he called "[his] university," for the meager sum of five dollars per week.
[19] Ibid., 39.
[20] Bernstein, 40
[21] Burton, 4.

through the sale of a primitive permanent wave machine. Just as his father had, Sam sought solace in religion as an escape from some of the more problematic aspects of his life, one being his acute awareness that his wife was not in love with him. "My mother and father were mismated, mismatched, both interesting and good people who should never have been married," Leonard's sister Shirley recalled.

> They were never in love with each other, unfortunately. And my father was a basically melancholic man who needed a lot of love and wasn't getting it from his marriage. If he was feeling loved he was the most generous, good-hearted, sweetest man in the world. If he was feeling unloved, he got very mean—to my mother, not to the kids.[22]

And yet, Shirley went on to explain a noteworthy aspect of Sam's personality in relationship to his Jewishness that none of the Bernstein children have dwelled on at length: "He was a manic-depressive type, so when he was with his rabbis celebrating the Sabbath, dancing and singing, he was an ecstatic Hasid."[23] In fact, music had always been a prominent factor in the comfort that religion provided for Sam, even in childhood. According to his son Burton,

> in the contradictory pattern that had dogged him for his entire life, he immersed himself in his religion, drawing succor and joy from it. The Hasidic excesses—the soul-stirring songs, the ecstatic dancing, the arcane mysticism—transported him, and upon reflection in his later years, made living in Russia bearable.[24]

From the account of both scholars and Bernstein himself, one might be tempted to assume that Sam's influence on Bernstein's career in music was largely a negative one. While he had certainly objected to his son's lack of interest in pursuing a career he deemed practical—owing, according to Bernstein, to his equating professional musicians with the *klezmer* performers of the Ukrainian *shtetl,* which were little more than

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[22] Ibid., 16.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Bernstein, 26.

beggars—Sam's allegiance to the mandates of his own Jewishness perhaps played a far greater role in his son's musical development than has been previously surmised. One might argue that the impact that Sam's Hasidism likely made on the young Leonard is one of the most overlooked factors in Bernstein's early musical inclinations: it insured that from a very early age, music was for him a symbol of joy and togetherness.

While Hasidism is often associated with its more rigid elements, the role that musical expression plays in the Hasid's relationship with his God stands in marked contrast to the sternest aspects of his religiosity. Music symbolizes the most joyful and loving aspects of this relationship; it is also a means to cultivating that connection as one of the primary vehicles of religious expression. While the subject of the role of music in Hasidism is far too complex to address here at length, it is significant to note that its utilization has been both requisite and relished by the *Hasidim* across the centuries.[25] Certain sacred songs such as the *niggun*—a communal means of musical worship that makes use of repetitive vocalizations—serve a highly practical purpose beyond their aesthetic value:

> as an expression of innermost emotions that cannot be expressed through words, [the *niggun*] is considered as a means for the *zaddick* to plumb the depths of a person's soul, and to discover whether that person is evil or pious. It also enables him to refine that person's soul and raise it to a higher level of existence. As for simple people, who have not achieved the level of the *zaddick*, the *niggun* can help them to attain spiritual elevation, either through singing, or passively, by listening. Hearing the *zaddick* singing a *niggun*, provides the ordinary person with a foothold at the edge of the world of the Sacred.[26]

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[25] For an overview of the topic and an analysis of the relevant bibliography, see the subcategory "The Musical Tradition of Hasidim" in A. Hadju and Y. Mazor, "Hasidism," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 2nd ed., vol. 8, 393-434.

[26] Ibid., 427. Here, *zaddick* refers to one who has attained a higher level of righteousness in his pursuit of the Divine.

Likewise, music is an important marker of identity for the Hasid—a coveted tradition of a select initiated few. Passed down through oral tradition, these melodies of old form the basis of a forgotten language that the Hasid seems to almost willfully avoid codifying for the non-Jewish other; or, as it is explained in *Encyclopedia Judaica*:

> …distinctions have not yet been formulated according to the norms of musical scholarship. The Hasidim themselves also possess criteria—formulated in their own traditional terms—according to which they judge whether a melody is "hasidic" or not, and to which dynasty-style and genre it belongs. These, too, have not yet been translated into ethnomusicological terms.[27]

For Sam, then, music was of primary importance to the religious experience; as such, his love of the art never waned. In fact, musical expression seemed to keep alive a part of his childlike excitement and wonder; to hear his youngest son speak of it in the aforementioned passage, to see the "ecstatic Hasid" emerge from this otherwise hard-boiled man must have been a surprising but gratifying thing to witness for his children. As biographer Meryle Secrest has reported,

> from childhood Bernstein was brought up listening to the Hasidic melodies, those tunes perhaps borrowed from Arabic, Greek, Turkish or Spanish roots and collected by Najara in the sixteenth century, and watching the faithful singing, dancing, clapping, and swaying. Once he could play the piano, he accompanied his father while he "sang and acted out the old story of a group of pilgrims visiting a rabbi on a holiday and being so moved by his ardent prayers that they offered to sacrifice themselves…" Sam Bernstein dancing and clapping—it is not the usual image presented of Bernstein's father, but it must have had an effect upon his impressionable son.[28]

That his youthful experience of music while attending temple would prove to be of unmatched importance to Bernstein has been noted both by scholars and the composer himself. Recalling it as the most influential musical experience of his youth, he referred

[27] Ibid., 425.
[28] Secrest, 5.

implicitly to the mysterious qualities accounting for the Jewishness of the music that have yet to be quantified by the academy:

> We were of the Conservative persuasion, which allowed for an organ and a choir in a hidden choir loft, and when they let rip I used to go mad! We had a fabulous cantor [Isadore Glickstein] who was a great musician and a beautiful man, very tall, very majestic. He would begin to sing ancient tunes—they are not exactly melodies, because they are not really written down; they're traditional, handed down orally—and he had a tenor voice of such sweetness and such richness—with a dark baritonal quality, I now realize; I didn't know a tenor from a baritone in those days—and then the organ would start and then the choir would begin with its colors, and I just began to get crazed with the sound of choral music.[29]

This account illuminates another important consideration in explaining Bernstein's understanding of his musical identity within the context of his own Jewishness. Much like its religious doctrine, the music of the Conservative movement at once upheld certain qualities as distinctively Jewish and blurred those very same boundaries. This merging of traditional music with elements of concert and American vernacular and church genres strikes a balance between distinct Jewishness and the modern assimilation so characteristic of the New Jew in America, and would seem to have given the young Bernstein a clear impression of how these lines could be blurred to effective ends for the sake of musical composition. In the American bourgeois home of Sam and Jennie, too, these lines were being blurred. Before he could even say the word correctly, his mother once recalled, an infant Leonard would cry out for her to play "moynik": "I'd turn on the Victrola and play him a record, and he would stop crying, like on a dime."[30] Prominent in the Bernstein record collection were cantorial songs, popular hits of the day, and even opera.[31] For the young Leonard Bernstein, all of these were part

[29] BBC-TV/Unitel, "Childhood," as quoted in Burton, 8-9. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[30] Ibid., 7.
[31] Ibid.

of one world that was music; that as an adult he would casually traverse the boundaries of these genres—both in his career decisions and even in his compositional language, all the while very much aware of himself as a "Jewish composer"—seems but a natural outgrowth of these childhood experiences.

Bernstein studied at William Lloyd Garrison School until 1929, attending Hebrew school at Mishkan Tefila every day for two hours at the close of the school day.[32] Though Bernstein himself does not seem to have commented at length on this experience, Theodore White, a Bostonian and historian of the same generation, once mused on the Hebrew schools of the era: "They were rigorous in their teaching of the young and violent in their temper when the tired children failed to respond."[33] Furthermore, the boys were schooled in the ancient Hebrew texts: "[The Torah] was explained to us in Hebrew, pounded into us in Hebrew, and we were forced to explain it to one another in Hebrew."[34] While we lack detailed insights from Bernstein on this period of his life, we can nonetheless speculate on its influence. Perhaps during this time, Bernstein's famous love of languages began to take hold. According to his brother Burton:

> He could make us laugh—makes us all laugh—in a dozen languages, including our very own family language called Rybernian.[35] Language: to Lenny, words were mysterious, astonishing creatures—to be scrutinized and analyzed likes cells under a microscope. Words were the equals of musical notes for him, and he loved them with equal fervor.[36]

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[32] Secrest, 14.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Along with childhood friend Eddie Ryack, Bernstein engineered a language "Ryberian," its name derived from a composite of the two boys names. The sounds of the language, according to Bernstein, derived from "anybody who talked funny," and included derivatives from German, Polish, and Yiddish. The invention of Ryberian exhibits the young Leonard's preoccupation with the otherness of his Eastern European ancestry, his love of language, and his imaginative spirit.
[36] Burton Bernstein and Barbara B. Haws, eds. *Leonard Bernstein: American Original* (New York: Collins, 2008), 208.

Indeed, Leonard would demonstrate his Hebrew proficiency at his Bar Mitzvah ceremony, reciting a speech that he himself wrote in both English and Hebrew; his proud father Sam rewarded his efforts with a new baby grand piano.[37]

Most significantly, one imagines that during these formative years, the Jewish value of the importance of education took hold of the bright and inquisitive young Leonard. As told by brother Burton:

> Teaching people—his favorite occupation, really. Descended from rabbis, he was a rabbi at heart, a master teacher. Just listening to Lenny was an education. (I know this better than most because I was taught by Lenny from just about my first day on this earth.) There was nothing he'd rather do than stimulate new thoughts for, especially, young minds.[38]

Indeed, the ties between Bernstein's Judaism and his fervor for education were immensely significant. For a time, the teenage Bernstein had even entertained the idea of becoming a rabbi himself; it was his father's second preference to his son following in his footsteps in the family business.[39] Like Burton, Jamie Bernstein, Leonard Bernstein's eldest child, also alluded to the ties between Bernstein's Jewishness and his pedagogical spirit:

> There's a Hebrew phrase that makes me think of my father: "Torah Lishmah." And it means, loosely translated, a raging thirst for knowledge…Leonard Bernstein had it about almost everything! He just could not absorb enough information on the things that interested him: not just music but also Shakespeare, the Renaissance, world religions, Lewis Carroll, biology, Russian literature, the two World Wars, astrophysics, French drama—and any places where these topics overlap. His brain was on fire with curiosity. And what he loved most was to communicate his excitement to others.[40]

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[37] Burton, 18.
[38] Ibid., 207
[39] Gottlieb, 10.
[40] Jamie Bernstein, "Leonard Bernstein: A Born Teacher," Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc., <http://www.leonardbernstein.com/education.htm>, accessed 3 September 2014. Used by permission of Jamie Bernstein.

However much one imagines Leonard Bernstein the boy thought of Hebrew school, the Jewish educational ideals he was being entrenched in during this time—both at home and within the walls of the synagogue—must have, at least in part, paved the way for an illustrious career that prominently included such pedagogical pursuits as a short tenure as a visiting professor at Brandeis University, a revamping of the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concert series that put the event on the map worldwide, the instructional *Omnibus* television series on CBS, becoming the first Charles Eliot Norton lecturer at Harvard University whose appearance was televised, and the education of a sizeable portion of an entire generation of American conductors.

In 1929, the exuberant eleven-year old Bernstein entered into the fold of one of the premier schools in the nation, the Boston Latin School. That he should be afforded the chance to attend such a school in the first place serves as a testament to the upward social mobility of the Bernsteins that so characterized their assimilatory immigrant experience. That he should even survive the program underscores his own gifts, as the school's high attrition rates were quite striking: only one-third of the students in Bernstein's class would eventually graduate in 1935.[41] Yet for those who did make the grade, a bright future lay ahead: of 258 graduating seniors, ninety-nine—including Bernstein—were set to matriculate at Harvard University in the fall of 1935.[42] Although little is known about this period of Bernstein's life in comparison to others, it would seem from all accounts that while his Jewishness certainly could not be expected to open otherwise closed doors, it had not presented any particular obstacle at Boston Latin—at

[41] Ron Gwiazda, "Leonard Bernstein at Boston Latin School," in Claudia Swan, ed. *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999), 43.
[42] Ibid., 44.

least educationally speaking. In later years, however, Bernstein did reflect on his experience of discrimination among his peers during those years:

> I wasn't a week in school before I was set upon, in the narrow streets behind the school-building, by a gang of five Irish boys led by one Tim Leary, a particularly good-looking fellow who I had admired and thought of as a friend. They left me battered and bleeding on the sidewalk, with a single word ringing in my ears: Christ-killer! I was exactly eleven-years old at the time; the year was 1929, half a century ago, and that word is again ringing in my ears. I remember coming home and asking my father that night why all this had happened, and why I had thus been labelled [*sic*] as a murderer.[43]

Fifty years later, the experience still haunted Bernstein, and one imagines how distraught and alienated such a cruel mocking must have made him feel as an eleven-year old boy.

As implied by the daunting attrition rates, the academic experience at Boston Latin was also something perhaps to be survived more than enjoyed:

> It was not a supportive, nurturing environment; attending Boston Latin amounted to undergoing a kind of trial by fire. Typically, forty lines of Latin translation were assigned each night, and on any given day a student could find himself the focus of his Latin class for the entire period, as he stood by the desk and was questioned on his translation. Students were referred to by their surnames exclusively. It is likely that Bernstein never heard an adult refer to him as Lenny or Leonard in his six years at the school—he would have answered to just "Bernstein." It was a world steeped in Social Darwinism: those who survived belonged...However, for many students, particularly the immigrant and first generation children—all those who came from families where no one had ever attended college—surviving Boston Latin School held the promise of single-handedly transforming the future of one's family, of catapulting it into an entirely different social and economic stratum.[44]

Apart from his academic life, there were several experiences of personal significance unfolding during this early period of the composer's life. The years at Boston Latin formed a pivotal time in Bernstein's development, both as a musician and as an assimilated New Jew. In 1933, the Bernstein family relocated their homestead from

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[43] Leonard Bernstein, "Speech re: anti-Semitism: November 19, 1979," Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 91, Folder 23. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[44] Gwiazda, "Leonard Bernstein at Boston Latin School," 44.

the predominantly Jewish, working-class Boston suburb of Roxbury to the upscale Newton. In a letter that summer, the teenage Lenny gushed to his friend Sid Ramin about the move: "We went to Newton to pick out colors for the new home. You should see that place! It's bigger, I think, than the 2-family house I lived in last year. A regular Colonial. It is beautiful."[45] Even with such a large faction of Jewish residents, life in Roxbury had not always been easy. Musing upon those days, Bernstein once joshed: "You know what I lack talent in? Boxing. I can't hit anybody. It's one of the real shames of my life. I remember being attacked by a bully when I was just a kid, maybe because I was Jewish. I couldn't fight back."[46] In relocating to Newton, the family had in effect declared their primary identity as Americans. Nonetheless, the family kept a kosher kitchen: no small task in the modern suburban world. While they were outside the home, however, the Bernstein children were free to eat as they pleased.

Although Bernstein had only begun piano instruction at the age of ten, he increasingly excelled in his musical studies throughout this period—moving through a series of progressively more demanding instructors—before he came under the tutelage of Helen Coates in 1932; she would prove a significant figure in Bernsteins life, leaving piano instruction behind to serve as his personal secretary in 1944, a post she would retain until her death in 1989.

During this period of his musical development, Bernstein and Ramin came to discover the music of Gershwin together, constructing their own arrangement of

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[45] Leonard Bernstein to Sid Ramin, 25 July 1933, as quoted in Nigel Simeone, ed., *The Leonard Bernstein Letters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2013), 6. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. Musician, friend, and informal student to the blossoming Bernstein, Ramin would later serve as one of two orchestrators for the score to *West Side Story*; he was to remain a lifelong friend of Bernstein. The two had met while attending primary school at William Lloyd Garrison in the 1920s.

[46] *New York Post*, 1 June 1960. As quoted in Secrest, 14.

Rhapsody in Blue for four-handed piano.[47] Bernstein fondly recalled how the boys "bought the sheet music of the piano solo arrangement and…went home and played it with tears until dawn. The excitement!"[48] That this Jewish American of Eastern European heritage—whose birth certificate bore the name Jacob Gershwine, and whose grandfather had been called Jakov Gershowitz[49]—could rise to the heights of a musical celebrity by infusing the language of Western European concert music with the distinctive American sounds of jazz; and equally, that he could enjoy acclaim both in the concert hall and on the Broadway stage, must have impressed Bernstein deeply, whether or not he was consciously framing the composer in such terms or relating Gershwin's plight to his own evolving goals at this early date. Although Gershwin himself appeared far less concerned than Bernstein would come to be about his legacy as a Jewish American composer, to Bernstein it seems, Gershwin nonetheless remained just that. Tellingly, Humphrey Burton recounts the scene in which Bernstein learned of Gershwin's death on 11 July 1937, while serving as a musical counselor at Camp Onota that summer:

> Bernstein was informed by the camp director that he would have to entertain at the piano during lunch. He refused at first, knowing how difficult it would be to be heard in the mess hall, but then the news came through on the radio of the sudden death of George Gershwin. In the midst of the meal, Bernstein struck a loud chord to get his audience's attention: when the clatter of cutlery and crockery had ceased, he announced that America's greatest Jewish composer had passed away. He then played Gershwin's Prelude No. 2, requesting in advance that there should be no applause afterward. When it was over there was a heavy silence in the hall. "As I walked off I felt I *was* Gershwin."[50]

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47 For a fascinating window into Bernstein's relationship with the music of Gershwin and especially *Rhapsody in Blue*, see Ryan Bañagale, "'Each Man Kills the Thing He Loves': Bernstein's Formative Relationship with *Rhapsody in Blue,*" *Journal for the Society of American Music* (Special Issue 01: "Bernstein in Boston") 3:1 (February 2009), 47-66.
48 Burton, 18.
49 William G. Hyland, *George Gershwin: A New Biography* (Wesport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 1-3.
50 Burton, 38.

One can surmise that Bernstein self-identified considerably with Gershwin, whom he lauded continually throughout his career and with whose music he was becoming more intimate during his adolescence.[51] Much as was the case with Gustav Mahler—the composer-conductor whose Judaism was of primary importance to Bernstein's championing of his work—Gershwin's Jewishness arguably served to strengthen Bernstein's lifelong bond to him, particularly when combined with the other similarities they shared.

Another experience of musical significance transpired when in May of 1932, Samuel and Leonard attended their first orchestral concert, obtaining two tickets from a lot purchased by Mishkan Tefila for a benefit concert for Histadrut, the Palestine trade union movement. Bernstein and his father sat riveted by the performance of the Boston Pops Orchestra in Symphony Hall under the baton of Arthur Fiedler. Specifically, both were most captivated by the program's finale: Maurice Ravel's *Bolero,* which had premiered only four years before. "I had never experienced anything like that in my life!" Bernstein would recall.[52]

> That piece of orchestration is like the bible of orchestrators. And it was important for another reason: my father liked it! He thought it was the most wonderful thing he had ever heard. The tune reminded him of Hebrew chants and Arabic melisma. That shed a ray of light into my otherwise dark, despairing life, because I was in a state of rebellion against him…He was convinced that I would never be able to support myself or my family as a musician. He didn't know about composers, he had never heard of Beethoven. How did you hear of Beethoven in the Ukraine, where he came from?[53]

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[51] During the very same period—as revealed by Bañagale in the above referenced *JSAM* article—Bernstein went to great effort to compose a rather unorthodox arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* for the performing forces generated by the boys of the camp, which he authored in response to the composer's death.

[52] BBC-TV/Unitel, "Childhood," as quoted in Burton, 20. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[53] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Again, we see how omnipresent were the Jewish aesthetic sensibilities of this family, even in the case of hearing the work of a non-Jewish composer. But the teenage Bernstein had his own ideas about how he could perhaps make his living in music. Not only had the concert contributed a shared experience to strengthen the bond between father and son, it had also set Bernstein's mind into motion: perhaps in the future, he too could conduct such an orchestra. He later recollected that the concert had sparked "all sorts of fantasies" about holding a post just like Arthur Fiedler's someday.[54] Further, the concert had contributed something fresh to his musical palette, receiving the same treatment at the piano as *Rhapsody in Blue*. "I remember…being so thrilled with *Bolero* at that concert that I saved up for two or three months so I could buy a piano arrangement."[55]

As Bernstein implied when he described his father's limited musical knowledge, life in the *shtetl* had provided reason enough for him to continue to oppose his son's musical ambitions—at least insofar as they translated into a career—but Sam was certainly supportive of his son's musical activities. It is fair to remember that Sam did contribute positively to his son's overall musical upbringing, and he continued to do so during this period, regularly attending Bernstein's recitals as a proud father. As former Bernstein neighbor Mitchell Cooper put it,

> you have to place this disapproval in the context of a community of immigrants struggling to survive in a reasonably hostile environment, who had made it. It would have taken an amazing man *not* to have wanted his son either to become a professional or go into business. Here you have a father who is wondering what's going to happen to the business and how it's going to look with his contemporaries? They are going to say, "Poor Sam, what a disappointment, and look at all the money he spent."[56]

[54] Secrest, 37.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 17.

Sam, then, lacked the proper context from his own limited life experiences to understand that in the United States of the New Jew, his son might have the opportunity to make a respectable career for himself as a musician. Nonetheless, Sam was thrilled by his son's affinity toward Jewish music when Leonard gave a recital at a meeting of the Brotherhood of the temple which included a set of variations in the styles of Bach, Chopin and Gershwin, all based on a Hasidic theme he had heard his father singing in the shower.[57]

By the fall of 1933, Bernstein was regularly attending the Boston Symphony with his childhood friend Mildred Spiegel with a Saturday night subscription. According to Spiegel, a pensive Bernstein had this to say after a concert led by the man who would one day be his conducting mentor, Serge Koussevitzky: "Not [did I] like it? I loved it! That's the trouble. I'm just jealous of any man who can make music like that."[58] Unlike it had been for Mahler, who was dismissed from his post in Vienna, in the United States, Judaism had not blocked Koussevitzky's access to obtaining one of the most prestigious orchestral posts in the nation; perhaps in America, the legitimacy of Koussevitzky's conversion to Christianity had been more accepted than that of Mahler in Austria. Bernstein's recollections, however, seem to suggest an awareness that it was perhaps his American nationality that might thwart his conducting ambitions. As recounted by Burton:

> He told interviewers later in life that as a boy he felt conducting to be something rare and exotic, done exclusively by foreigners like Toscanini, Stokowski or Koussevitzky. From the second balcony of Symphony Hall, the conductor was an unreal miniature figure on the platform.[59]

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[57] Burton, 20.
[58] Ibid., 27.
[59] Ibid.

During his later years of secondary school, Bernstein was partaking in an experience the assimilated New Jew of upper-crust suburbia was able to enjoy without restriction, and one to which he would allude in "There is Something. WHAT?" when contemplating the privileges of assimilation: "Is Grossinger's enough?" During the summers, the Bernstein family retreated to the Jewish vacation town of Sharon, Massachusetts, which was, as Bernstein himself put it, "very upper class indeed."[60] As Burton has observed,

> Sharon served as second home for some two dozen affluent Jewish families. After renting a house there in 1931, Sam liked the community so much that he decided to put down roots: he became treasurer at the Congregation Adath Sharon and built a pleasant summer cottage…Sharon became the center of the Bernstein family life from June through September. Many Boston parents packed their children off to summer camps but having a summer house was infinitely preferable, particularly when you could go swimming in the Sharon lake every day. While Sam commuted into the city, the rest of the family enjoyed the country air.[61]

Burton Bernstein likewise recalled that "during Lenny's difficult teens, his most carefree times were the summers spent in Sharon."[62] Yet as Bernstein perhaps inferred in his poem, Burton lamented that "not many country towns within feasible commuting distance of Boston were open to Jews in those days, either for vacations or for permanent addresses." There was indeed something inherently Jewish about Sharon besides the religious affiliation of its residents. Burton recalled:

> The Sharon natives, mostly "swamp Yankees" who then were in difficult economic straits, sold their land to the strange city people…Sam was instantly entranced by the clear, piny Sharon air, the frigid sprawling lake, and the Jews who had made it in America. The Grove was, in effect, a middle-class American *shtetl*!...They were a tightly knit, neighborly, backbiting, feuding, forgiving,

[60] Ibid., 26.
[61] Ibid., 21.
[62] Bernstein, 118.

> gracious, vulgar, devout, parochial, charitable, fearful, stalwart community—or as the old saying goes, just like other people, only more so.[63]

As Burton has already implied, however, the Bernsteins's fond experience of Sharon was in part due to the fact that its community was on the cusp of the New Jewish assimilation: a town where even Gentiles were not only welcome to attend synagogue services, they were expected to do so as a neighborly courtesy! Aside from the roughness around the edges, there was little about this experience that could be compared to what Sam had conveyed of his *shtetl* upbringing, and it was precisely for this reason that he probably felt so at home there. Burton Bernstein recollects:

> I doubt if any summer visitor to the Grove ever forgot the place and its people. Every guest—whether Jew or Gentile—was obliged to attend at least one weekend service at the Congregation Adath Sharon…the congregation met in the small cottage of Rabbi Isaac Hochman. What stranger could fail to be captivated by the chaos of those services? The droning incomprehensibility of Rabbi Hochman's Hebrew litanies, mumbled through a scraggly salt-and-pepper beard. The ancient rabbi's interminable sermons in Yiddish…Unforgettable, too, were the spontaneous prayerful assemblies whenever one of the Grove's sons went off to war, or the equally spontaneous and prayerful celebrations when a major victory was announced or a son came home.[64]

Burton's concluding statement regarding the Adath Sharon congregation—conducting its services in both the Yiddish of immigrants and traditional Hebrew and extending a hand of friendship to their Gentile neighbors—is easily the most telling. Etched in his memory were the very scenes in which this Jewish community, stemming from ancestors who must have partaken in a far more guarded and isolationist culture of otherness, proclaimed their pride as Americans. The victories of the homeland were their victories; the losses of young men were both their own and that of America itself. While this

[63] Ibid., 120.
[64] Ibid., 122.

description emanates from Burton's experiences about a decade later, it is nonetheless revealing of the nature of the "second home" of Leonard Bernstein's teenaged years.

The assimilated middle-class Sharon also provided Bernstein with the perfect laboratory for his growing music prowess. In 1933, Leonard procured an upright piano for use in the Bernstein summer home; by 1934, he undertook quite a bold project for a fifteen-year-old: together with fellow Boston Latin classmate Dana Schnittken, he mounted a spoof production of George Bizet's *Carmen* before an audience of some 200 people in the community that was—to say the least—unconventional for its day.[65] As Bernstein later recalled:

> Together we wrote a highly localized joke version of a highly abbreviated *Carmen* in drag, using just the hit tunes. Dana played Micaela in a wig supplied by my father's Hair Company—I'll never forget his blonde tresses—and I sang Carmen in a red wig and a black mantilla and in a series of chiffon dresses borrowed from various neighbors on Lake Avenue, through which my underwear was showing. Don José was played by the love of my life, Beatrice Gordon. The bullfighter…was played by a lady called Rose Schwartz. For my little sister, I wrote a prologue in verse in which she explained the story because otherwise no one would have gotten it.[66]

As an added gag, presumably intended either to amuse the local residents or perhaps to push the boundaries with his father, Bernstein organized a chorus "[consisting] of young girls dressed like old Jewish men, complete with long black beards and yarmulkes."[67] Burton Bernstein would later muse that some of them "looked like members of the audience. But if nothing else, Jewish humor is self-depreciatory, and everyone had a wonderful time."[68] Apparently, Sam had not yet been pushed to his limits.

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[65] Burton, 23.
[66] BBC-TV/Unitel, "Childhood," as quoted in Burton, 22-23. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[67] Burton, 23.
[68] Bernstein, 127-128. Leonard Bernstein and his collaborators would later poke fun at Jewish conventions in their own theatrical enterprises; this tendency is perhaps best exemplified in their portrayal of the rabbi

According to Leonard, "even [he] loved it. He lent us the wigs, after all. It was the sort of innocent musical fun he approved of for me—good relaxation but not a career."[69]

Aside from the obvious musical significance of this event—which foretold Bernstein's healthy sense of satire on the theater stage, the expansive musical understanding that underscored his brilliant improvisatory skills at the piano, and perhaps most of all, his flair for the dramatic—this enterprise on the part of a teenage Bernstein stands as a particularly striking incident in the context of examining his relationship to his Judaism. While one could quickly pass off this bit of trivia as an elaborate joke on the part of a rebellious youngster—and it was that—it is nonetheless important to note that which Bernstein was rebelling against: namely, the traditionally ascribed socio-cultural gender roles of his entire religion. As Benbassa and Attias have explained with great insight:

> The confusion of distinct kinds is the greatest imaginable evil [in Judaism], because it represents a return to chaos…The rejection of the hybrid and the mixed is omnipresent…A woman must not wear men's apparel, nor a man put on women's clothes, "for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the Eternal, your God." [70]

As a bisexual man whose attractions were primarily to men, Bernstein's battle to negotiate within the restrictive framework of gender difference—as prescribed both by society at large and his own Jewishness—was indeed another of the central themes of his life, for it guaranteed that even within the world of the Jewish other, there was another layer of otherness with which to contend, and which placed him in a sort of out-group

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Voltaire introduced in *Candide*, who—for a fee—shares the privilege of sexual favors from Cunegonde with a Catholic priest.

[69] Ibid., 128.

[70] Benbassa and Attias, 56.

within an out-group.[71] Bernstein's sexuality, one presumes, must have been a primary obstacle to his sense of feeling that he was a "good Jew."

The edict of gender separatism that reigns in traditional Judaism—indeed of separatism in general, such as in the case of traditional dietary laws—is both rigid and all-encompassing, pervading many areas of the Jew's life outside of the temple; relations between men and their wives, for example, are forbidden when the woman is experiencing her menstrual cycle, one of the distinctive markers of her feminine identity. In the temple, women do not "count" toward the necessary numbers needed to establish a *minyan* for the purpose of prayer. This strict separation between the sexes in Judaism is not entirely foreign to a people whose own separateness from society at large comprises a large portion of their identity. Benbassas and Attias have explained the lack of tolerance to archetypes that deviate from the Jewish gender normative as follows:

> Every individual must play the masculine or feminine role that has fallen to his or her lot. It is the inversion or introversion of roles that introduces chaos. It seems safe to assure that this is what is hidden beneath the prohibition of (masculine) homosexuality: "if a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them." The crime here consists of treating a man as if he were a woman, or, if one is a man, in agreeing to take the woman's role…[the] aim [is] to preserve distinction…The faithful Jew's whole life is marked by this demand for distinction. Israel will be able fully to realize its mission among nations, if it has one, only if it remains separate from them.[72]

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[71] Bernstein ultimate married Chilean actress Felcia Montealegre, with whom he had three children. The topic of Bernstein's sexuality has been discussed at length in a host of sources within the pertinent literature, but the conflict in viewpoints concerning Bernstein's sincerity in his family life was perhaps most accurately characterized as follows in Charles Kaiser's *The Gay Metropolis, 1940-1955* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 89: "Bernstein was married and the father of three children, but [Arthur] Laurents considered Bernstein 'a gay man who got married. He wasn't conflicted about it at all. He was just gay.' [Stephen] Sondheim refused to characterize Bernstein's sexuality. But he felt that Bernstein's family was very important to him. 'The *idea* of family was deeply rooted: patriarchy. It had nothing to do with pretending to be heterosexual or anything like that.'"

[72] Benbassa and Attias, 57-58.

Here then, one too begins to see one important reason why the Jew—and more specifically, Bernstein himself—relates so strongly and innately to Israel's dichotomous plight of separatism and a desire to belong among the world's nations, even from afar. From this vantage point, the Jewish state can be seen as an extension of the Jew's individual pursuit of identity: always guided conversely and simultaneously by the principles of assimilation and separation.

The summer after his successful mounting of *Carmen*, Bernstein took it upon himself to direct his second stage production in Sharon, choosing Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado* in the summer of 1935; the following year he would undertake *HMS Pinafore.*[73] In both cases, Bernstein casted his sister Shirley in a lead role. Once again, Bernstein's desire to separate himself from his father's generation was made clear by the headstrong way in which he pursued these musical projects. One can imagine Sam's irritation at seeing his young adolescent daughter precociously frolicking on the stage in very adult makeup and clothing. When he was offered a chance to invest in a budding company known as Revlon, he had raged bitterly: "You're making American women into whores!...You're painting their nails so they'll look like two-dollar whores! Get out of my office!"[74]

According to brother Burton, Sam's patience was beginning to wane concerning his son's musical activities. "'Its's *Shabbas* [Sabbath]!' he'd shout at Lenny. 'Stop playing the piano and go to *shul*!'"[75] Sam, it seemed, no longer found humor in his son's recreational choices: increasingly, the productions—and the artsy-types that these activities drew into his son's life—were becoming a distraction from the path he had

[73] Burton, 24.
[74] Secrest, 26.
[75] Bernstein, 129. In this context, *shul* refers to synagogue.

intended for Leonard. While both father and son desired to assimilate—to become "good Americans"—their individual definitions of what that entailed were growing more and more divergent, leading to a number of conflicts between them that could hardly be seen simply as a difference of outlook concerning Leonard's musical ambitions. When Helen Coates inquired into Sam's failure to attend his son's performance of the first movement of Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto, his response was fairly categorical in its disapproval of his son's pursuit of a career in music:

> I, too, deeply regret that I was unable to attend the concert to which you refer; you can believe me that I was unavoidably detained that evening from making an appearance…While I am confident of his progress in his musical education, I shall want him to continue to treasure his accomplishments in this connection solely from an idealistic viewpoint. Notwithstanding my respect for a professional career in the musical world, from a practical standpoint, I prefer that he does not regard his music as a future means of maintenance.[76]

Aside from the growing rift between father and son, there were other things on Leonard's mind in the time just before he would matriculate at Harvard, as can be seen in an essay composed during his senior year at Boston Latin. Bernstein first addresses his unease in the path of "claiming a fairly stable business," as opposed to opting for a career in music. "In fact," the seventeen-year old went on, "there is never a time when I do not prefer playing my piano to any other sort of work or recreation." He elaborated: "I would probably attempt a Harvard training because of the superb musical department there. Several German professors, such as [Dr. Hugo] Leichtentritt, who have left their native land for obvious reasons, are now giving instruction there."[77] Here, one glimpses an early hint of the anxieties that would plague him throughout the unfolding of the rise and fall of the Third Reich. By the fall of 1934, events were indeed growing dire in Germany: the

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[76] Burton, 27-28.
[77] Essay in Leonard Bernstein Collection, 22 October 1934, as quoted in Burton, 28. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

infamous Night of the Long Knives, in which Hitler disposed of over eighty men he considered enemies of the state—including close associate Ernst Röhm—displayed plainly that the new Chancellor was not opposed to using violence in achieving his goals. While we have little word from Bernstein on the subject at this early date, his mentioning the pressures imposed on German Jews in the context of an essay concerning his future career plans suggests how disturbed he must have been by the increasingly precarious situation for his people across the Atlantic. By the time Bernstein began college in the fall of 1935, the Nuremberg Laws would be in effect; with this brutal initiative, German Jews were stripped of a great many of their rights as citizens.

To understand the hardships Bernstein faced at the undergraduate institution he would always hold in an idealistically high regard, one must examine the closed society that was the Harvard of the early twentieth century. Between the years of 1900 and 1922, the Jewish constituency at the university had tripled, resting at around 21 percent; Jewish students also excelled in a number of categories beyond their non-Jewish counterparts and disproportionate to their numbers.[78] According to a report on the matter at Jewish Virtual Library: "Non-Jews accused them of being clannish, socially unskilled and either unwilling or unable to 'fit in.'" As mentioned previously, Harvard had sought to put an end to their particular "Jewish Problem" by installing a quota. Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell spoke as though this were merely a "courtesy" to protect the institution's Jewish students: "The anti-Semitic feeling among the students is increasing, and it grows in proportion to the increase in the number of Jews. If their number should become 40% of the student body, the race feeling would become intense." But as Harry Starr, President of Harvard's Menorah Society at that time would later recall: "We

[78] "Harvard's Jewish Problem."

learned that it was numbers that mattered; bad or good, too many Jews were not liked. Rich or poor, brilliant or dull, polished or crude—[the problem was] too many Jews." At the time, Starr had fought passionately to stave off the use of quotas, to no avail, arguing: "The Jew cannot look on himself as a problem.... Born or naturalized in this country, he is a full American."[79] In spite of his efforts, Jewish representation amongst the student body was scaled back by 1931, capped at only fifteen percent.[80]

Aside from the stigmatization of Jewishness at Harvard, Bernstein faced further discrimination when he tried to join the Signet Society, a campus group devoted to the arts: because he was Jewish, he was not elected for membership. Bernstein, however, ignored this slight in favor of a different set of complaints: "One could walk through the Music Building for two hours and never hear a note because it was all on a blackboard or being discussed in hushed whispers."[81] Nothing if not resourceful, the headstrong Bernstein merely founded his own club at the university instead, devoted entirely to the study of modern music and composition. "We could exchange views and our own music and hear new music," he later recalled. "We played Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* arranged for four hands…somebody came in with a record of Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite* and we all listened to this amazing new thing like a cabalistic society. All of a sudden, new worlds were open to me."[82]

Other worlds, however, remained closed. According to Humphrey Burton, Bernstein was further excluded from performing with the Hasty Pudding Show, a campus

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] BBC-TV/Unitel, "Childhood," as quoted in Burton, 33. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[82] David Wright, "Bernstein at Harvard: The Artist and the Escape Artist," in Claudia Swan, ed. *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999), 8-9.

revue devoted to musical comedy.[83] In the end, Bernstein would have his own answer to this as well; for now, he was engrossed with his studies and, one imagines, trying to find his way in the midst of Harvard's closed academic subculture. While Bernstein seems to have both revered his alma mater for its intellectual stimulation and disliked the largely theoretical approach to music, his feelings toward his undergraduate institution were, and remained, largely positive. Indeed, Bernstein reveled in the delights of the high social standing his very presence at Harvard reflected, particularly for the son of two Jewish immigrants, at a time when only a small fraction of Americans could afford to pursue a college education. At this early juncture, perhaps fueled by the continued cognizance of his otherness and desire to assimilate, Bernstein told Sid Ramin that he intended to cultivate a Harvard accent.[84] Later, Bernstein would muse on just how many doors Harvard had opened for him: "I mean, to think how provincial one was, and how restricted one was in the ghetto created by my father around me—around us. It's an amazing thing to have busted out of."[85] Here, Bernstein could just as easily have used the phrase "old world Jewish traditionalism" in place of the word ghetto, for it is hard to imagine he could have meant it any other way. By entering the world of Harvard, Bernstein had once and for all separated from his father and that which he represented; now, he was in the land of the New Jew.

While he kept close ties with home, staying in regular contact with old friends such as Ramin and Coates, the Harvard years brought a number of new and significant figures into the circle of the budding composer. Outside of the walls of Harvard,

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[83] Burton, 33.
[84] Ibid., 34.
[85] "Leonard Bernstein: An Interview with Vivian Perlis," in Claudia Swan, ed. *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999), 21.

Bernstein also became a member of the studio of Heinrich Gebhardt, perhaps the most formidable piano teacher in the greater Boston area at the time.[86] Then, in the fall of 1937, Bernstein attended a New York dance performance at which Aaron Copland was in the audience; their meeting was one of the most influential of the former's life. Much like Gershwin, Bernstein thought of Copland, too, in terms of his Judaism: "I pictured [Aaron Copland] as a sort of patriarch, a Moses-like or Walt Whitman-like figure with a beard, because that's what the music says," he would recall. "But this Aaron was not that Aaron. I was shocked to meet this very young-looking, smiling, giggling fellow, whose birthday it happened to be."[87] Afterwards, Bernstein attended a party swarming with the New York elite of modern music, charming and impressing the composer with his own riveting performance of Copland's *Piano Variations,* which he joked "could empty a room, guaranteed, in two minutes" because of its complex structure and compositional process.[88] The two became fast friends (and probably much more), and both harbored a great deal of mutual respect. Not only would the friendship endure for life, it would likewise prove to be important in advancing Bernstein's musical sensibilities. Though informally, Copland took on the encouraging role of Bernstein's elder and teacher, not only in music but in life itself; his influence often proved a moderating force that grounded his capricious younger colleague, who routinely sought his advice on a variety of matters.[89]

Bernstein also met one of his conducting idols at Harvard, the Greek music director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Dimitri Mitropoulos. The seasoned

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[86] Burton, 34.
[87] Ibid., 41.
[88] Ibid.
[89] The degree to which Copland advised Bernstein in personal matters can be seen in the letters chosen by Nigel Simeone for his edited collection, *The Leonard Bernstein Letters.*

Mitropoulos would prove significant for exposing Bernstein to the latest trends in the conducting world, much as Copland had done as a composer. The two shared an intense dynamic during his years at Harvard that would later become complex, particularly when Bernstein replaced Mitropoulos as the musical director of the New York Philharmonic in 1958.[90] One of the more interesting bits of trivia surrounding the Bernstein/Mitropoulos relationship from this period comes in Bernstein's "fictional" realization of the dynamic between a boy named Carl (presumably Bernstein) and a Mitropoulos-like character, Marvo, for whom Carl is "[beginning] to feel a great and awful love."[91] Aside from indicating that Bernstein's confusion with his sexuality was probably only growing by this point, it indicates just how much the provincial Bernstein was coming into his own at Harvard. Bernstein wrote about an encounter in which the two went out to lunch, with Marvo seductively offering his protégé an oyster on a fork. Whether or not this is actually how it happened, the *trayf* oyster represents Bernstein's idea of the forbidden fruit in this scenario; here, it seems to stand for his larger concerns about just how far into the world of the non-Jewish other he should dare venture.[92]

Aside from issues pertaining to his sexuality and musical interests, Bernstein's intellect and world consciousness expanded greatly during his Harvard years. By 1938, Bernstein had been appointed the music editor of the *Harvard Advocate*. His increasing involvement with a group of New York Jewish musical elite through Copland also led to his contributing to a journal based there, titled *Modern Music.*[93] Bernstein's submissions

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[90] For more on the circumstances surrounding this incident, please see William R. Trotter, *Priest of Music: The Life of Dimitri Mitropoulos* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1995), 406-411.
[91] Leonard Bernstein, "The Occult," in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 29. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[92] The descriptor *trayf* refers to that which is not in accordance with Jewish dietary laws.
[93] Burton, 44.

to each of these publications provide a window into the audacious undergraduate's mindset at the time, both musical and extramusical. In a concert review published in *Modern Music*, Bernstein wryly observed of Prokofiev's ballet, *Chout,* that "one is thankful these days for a concertpiece that has a finale one can whistle while leaving the Hall."[94] When the aesthetics of the musical selections were not aligned with Bernstein's sensibilities, however, he minced few words. He took Prokofiev to task for his Piano Concerto No. 1, a work that he asserts "sounded like the student work that it is…when it was over you asked, 'why?'"[95]

In a contemporaneous review of the Boston Symphony's first two concerts of the 1938-1939 season published in the *Harvard Advocate*, Bernstein was no less brash in his assessments. While he saluted Koussevitzky "for doing more modern music than any conductor in the country under formidably adverse conditions," he lambasted the concert culture at large: "The symphony orchestras sometimes break out into a modern whimsy for a few minutes. Just enough to assure the public that music no longer is."[96] In his assessment of Copland's *El Salón México,* he—not unexpectedly—praised the composer. What is more noteworthy, however, is Bernstein's reasoning for lauding the superior quality of the work of this wholly American composer: "It is thoroughly good. Good for the public (it is essentially a popular piece), good for the musician (it is subtle and masterful), good for Mexicans (who agree that the spirit of their country was really captured)."[97] In this statement, one glimpses the start of a constant theme in Bernstein's

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[94] Leonard Bernstein, "Boston Carries On," *Modern Music* (May-June 1938), reprinted in Claudia Swan, ed. *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999)*,* 24.
[95] Leonard Bernstein, "Music," *Harvard Advocate* 25:2 (November 1938) reprinted in Claudia Swan, ed. *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999)*,* 24.
[96] Ibid., 29.
[97] Ibid. 29-30.

compositional thinking: that the most successful of music requires a degree of "assimilation" in order to appear as natural and artistically relevant. This is the argument that would not only form the central argument of Bernstein's undergraduate thesis, but also the composer's own musical strivings. It should also be noted that Bernstein's review offers a window into the omnipresence of the precarious happenings in the world, specifically in Nazi Germany. In his assessment of the *New World Symphony*, he posited that "Koussevitzky played it as a gesture of sympathy to what was once Czechoslovakia," a recent territorial addition to Hitler's Third Reich, the acquisition of which had been met with loud complaints but ultimately, only passive opposition.[98]

Indeed, a letter written to Aaron Copland following the *Anschluss* of Germany and Austria into a common empire on 22 March 1938 expounds upon these themes far more overtly and thunderously. Although he rages at length on more than one issue, the palpable tension seems to stem largely from what is presented in the opening of the correspondence:

> The week has made me so sick, Aaron, that I can't breathe anymore. The whole superfluousness of art shows up at a time like this, and the whole futility of spending your life in it. I take it seriously—seriously enough to want to be with it constantly till the day I die. But why? With millions of people going mad—madder every day because of a most mad man strutting across borders—with every element that we thought had refined human living and made what we call civilization being actively forgotten, deliberately thrown back, like railroad tracks when you look hard enough at them—what chance is there?[99]

Bernstein goes on to explain his distaste for a piano recital given by Cara Verson, in which she performed Copland's *Piano Variations*:

> I don't know whether you knew it was going to be played here, but if you did, how did you allow it? In short, she really gave no performance at all…I was purple—I wish I could let you know how incredibly bad it was; it was the work of

[98] Ibid.
[99] Burton, 44.

> an imbecile. I left then and broke dishes in the Georgian cafeteria…Excuse this outburst, Aaron, but whole concatenation of rotten, destructive things has made me very angry and disappointed.[100]

Copland's reply was of the cautious and paternal tone of a mentor. He reminded his young friend to remain grounded: "This is only 1938. Man has a long time to go. Art is quite young. Life has its own dialectic. Aren't you always curious to see what tomorrow will bring?"[101]

The Jewish predicament in Europe, however, had a long distance to go before reaching its lowest point, and Bernstein's final years at Harvard had much to offer him on a personal level. The very same year, Bernstein was solicited by the Harvard Greek Society to compose an incidental score for their upcoming production of Aristophanes's *The Birds.* The event was a triumph, showcasing a talent that foreshadowed Bernstein's later contributions to musical theater: works that transformed age-old literature into contemporarily relevant and entertaining productions.[102] In this case, however, Bernstein's abilities as a dramatist would be all the more important, for it would be the work of the staging and musical score to communicate a relevant message to the audience from the Classical Greek text. As Bernadette A. Meyler observed, "the costumes, gestures, and above all, the musical score assumed the formidable task of rendering Aristophanes' jokes, laden with political *double-entendres* derived from fifth-century BC Athens, accessible to twentieth-century spectators."[103]

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[100] Ibid., 45.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Bernstein and his collaborators would take a rather whimsical approach to Voltaire's weighty novel of the same title with *Candide* (1956); the pinnacle of the composer's achievement in this effort is, of course, most evident in his contribution to *West Side Story* (1957), which reframed Shakespearean tragedy into a modern urban saga of ethnic clashes between New York gangs.
[103] Bernadette A. Meyler, "Composing (for a) Philosophical Comedy," in Claudia Swan, ed. *The Harvard Years* (Dalton, MA: Studley Press, 1999), 71.

Indeed, it could be said that Bernstein was the perfect choice to assume such a role in this production. A brilliant musician and an inspired dramatist by all accounts of his teenage follies in Sharon, Bernstein was also constantly engaged in negotiating between the Old World traditionalism of ancient Jewry that had been handed down to him and his American sensibilities, coming together to create a New Jew who at once clung to the identities of his forefathers and carried their modern relevance into his role in the United States. Indeed, Bernstein's desire to assimilate—to negotiate his Jewry with his Americanism—would carry over directly from the home of his youth into his compositional life; later, it would drive him further still as the first American-born conductor to take on a prominent role in the Israeli musical scene. As Meyler notes accurately, however, Bernstein would ultimately hold up the genre of musical theater as a uniquely American vehicle for the musical melding of comic and serious dramatic elements: above all, this budding musical genius was and would remain, firmly and above all, an American composer.

But Bernstein would have an even greater personal triumph in his endeavor to produce Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock.* Set in "Steeltown, USA," the leftist musical drama offered a window into the struggles of the working man against his elite superiors to form a union and claim his rights. Directed by Orson Welles under the production of John Houseman, the show ignited a media firestorm when, after a government-imposed ban had closed the show, the creators defiantly set out to an alternate venue and proceeded legally to resume performances with Blitzstein playing the

piano onstage while the cast sang from the audience.[104] The liberal social consciousness exhibited by the work as well as the maverick activism in which its creators had engaged must have captivated the young Bernstein, himself no stranger to non-conformism. Blitzstein, like many affluent Jews of his day, counted himself among a growing leftist movement that had chartered its own course in Roosevelt's New Deal America; Bernstein, too, was coming to discover his active interest in leftist politics and developing his own keen sense of social justice. With the assistance of the Harvard Dramatic Club and under the patronage of a wealthy faction who were friendly to Blitzstein's cause, Bernstein succeeded in garnering the necessary resources for a production and—even more audaciously—invited the composer himself to attend, despite having only ten days to rehearse the cast before the premiere.[105] In Blitzstein, Bernstein was to find another older Jewish musician to mentor him in life and music alike; the composer, who had studied for a time with both Nadia Boulanger and Arnold Schoenberg but exhibited a decidedly Americanist style, injected further versatility into Bernstein's musical social circle. "I met his plane in East Boston," he recalled. "He attended our dress rehearsal that morning and then we walked, all afternoon, by the Charles River…the image leaps up in my mind: Marc lying on the banks of the Charles, talking, bequeathing to me his knowledge, insight, warmth."[106]

For his own part, Blitzstein was perhaps equally impressed with the tenacious Bernstein, and with his rogue production. Other artistic heavyweights agreed. Esteemed

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[104] Scott Miller, "Inside *The Cradle Will Rock*," New Line Theatre, <http://www.newlinetheatre.com/cradle.html>, accessed 4 May 2014. In 1947, *The New York Times* trumpeted that the work "has qualities of genius…It catches fire, it blazes, it amuses and grips the listener."
[105] Burton, 53.
[106] Leonard Bernstein, "Tribute to Marc Blitzstein," in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 224. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

critic Elliot Norton lauded the event as having "the most talented student cast the department had ever seen."[107] More interestingly, Bernstein had once again solicited the assistance of his fifteen-year-old sister Shirley, who played the part of a prostitute known as the Moll. One can only imagine how this appalled the elder Sam, in spite of his only passively protesting against the venture. According to Humphrey Burton: "At the supper table before she set off her father would say gloomily that he hoped the police would catch her for driving underage without a license."[108] Blitzstein, conversely, was thrilled by her contribution, writing her a letter of gratitude praising her efforts as equal to Olive Stanton, the professional in his own cast, and asking her to record the show's most famed song, "Nickel Under the Foot." As Burton has opined convincingly, "in the young Leonard Bernstein, Blitzstein saw an image of himself at the same age."[109] This relationship too would extend until the latter's untimely death in 1964.

Perhaps of greatest note in studying Bernstein's attitudes toward identity and assimilation during this time period was a work in which he provided insight into American musical identity: his senior thesis, "The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music." Not withstanding the observations of his professor, Hugo Leichtentritt, who "thoroughly [disapproved]" of what he called an "arrogant attitude and air of superiority" revealed by the document, the thesis allowed Bernstein to graduate with honors.[110]

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[107] Burton, 53.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 53-54.
[110] For more on Bernstein's Harvard Thesis, particularly as it relates to the formation of his musical identity, see Geoffrey Block, "Bernstein's Senior Thesis at Harvard: The Roots of a Lifelong Search to Discover an American Identity," *College Music Symposium* 48 (2008), 52-68.

While Leichtentritt's criticism is certainly legitimate, the work is impressively penetrating and largely successful in its professed goal of illuminating the larger trends in an emerging American musical autonomy. Bernstein argued that such an evolution had occurred in two fundamental stages: a material stage, in which ethnic and subcultural materials such as Native American music, New England psalmody, and "Negro music"—none of which were considered archetypal of the American musical experience—were superficially appropriated in an attempt to arrive at a uniquely "American" product. The second stage, which Bernstein dubbed the "spiritual stage," had been reached when composers had ceased to be cognizant of this process: that is to say, when the pertinent ethnic musical materials were integrated to a level in which "the material itself [was] gradually lost in the generality of its 'feeling.'"[111] In order for this metamorphosis to occur, however, the public itself would have to be reasonably assimilated to a level that facilitated the emergence of a vernacular musical vocabulary: a language that would be accepted as fully American to the population at large. This, Bernstein opined, had finally occurred with jazz, spurring the process forward at a crucial time in the first step of the process. Bernstein, of course, also had much to say about some of his Jewish compositional idols: namely, Gershwin and Copland, the former being important in the infancy of the spiritual stage and the latter realizing it to its fullest potential. As Bernstein emphasizes, "nationalism is not an element arbitrarily inflicted on music, nor even cultivated within music; it must be organic. To be organic it must grow, a process implying the formation of roots and a consequential development."[112] This very same

[111] "The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music," in Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 40. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[112] Ibid., 38. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

reasoning would one day impact Bernstein's thinking in regard to the musical life of Israel.

The ideas Bernstein advances in the document could be thought of as an extension of those to which he alluded in the previously mentioned reviews. Indeed, the thesis represents the culmination of a particular set of socio-musical ideals that Bernstein had been cultivating throughout his time at Harvard. Owing to a widening of his educational horizons, as well as his social connections under the influence of prominent personalities such as Copland, Blitzstein, and Mitropoulos, Bernstein was perhaps more cognizant than ever before of the disconnection between the Judaism of old and new, between the political and practical concerns that dominated the lives of the provincial versus the urban Jew, and between assimilation and separation—in both cultural and musical contexts. As he came face-to-face with anti-Semitism at the institutional level within the halls of one of America's premier universities, perhaps even reckoning with its overt effects for the first time; as he sought to negotiate his own individual identity within the framework of an increasingly tumultuous period for his European Jewish counterparts in the prelude to war, Bernstein—in more ways than one—had truly undergone a coming-of-age experience at Harvard, the implications of which would continue to dominate both his thinking and his decisions in the coming years.

* * *

In July of 1939, with uncertainties about his future abounding, Leonard Bernstein travelled to New York to share a sublet with Broadway enthusiast Adolph Green, whom he had met two summers before at Camp Onota; the pair had bonded over their mutual musical tastes. Whether or not it had been clear at this early date, Green—who would

soon introduce Bernstein to playwright Betty Comden—typified the artsy, liberal Bohemian Jew with whom Bernstein had increasingly identified during his Harvard years, and with whom he would soon find a socio-political home. Sam, however, had long since registered the threat. As Burton Bernstein recalls, "when Lenny invited Green to Sharon, they would sit around the house for hours…while Sam stewed and paced. 'Who is that nut?' he'd say to the equally bemused Jennie. 'I want him out of my house!'"[113] Incidentally, it had been a chance meeting between Green and Blitzstein that had sparked the Bernstein/Green reunion in New York.

Indeed, the company with whom Bernstein increasingly chose to enrich himself had turned him decisively away from the world of his youth; away from the world of the reluctantly progressive Jewish immigrant who was still yet unable to divorce himself entirely from family tradition. David Wright has noted in his discussion of Bernstein during this period that with the exception of Koussevitzky, many of the most significant personalities in Bernstein's life—Gershwin, Copland, Blitzstein, Mitropoulos, Adolph Green, Betty Comden, even Gustav Mahler—had been pulled into the orbit of the New York musical scene.[114] Perhaps, however, the most significant link between all of these figures, excluding Mitropoulos but including Koussevitzky, was that all of them—relative to their generational circumstances, of course—had shed the ancestral clothes of their Judaism in favor of a degree of assimilation that must have been rather unthinkable

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[113] Bernstein, 126. Burton Bernstein goes on to observe that both of his parents "grew to have sincere affection for Adolph Green (and other unconventional friends of Lenny's)…Sam, unlike Jennie, never really came to understand Green's special quality and talent—just as he never really understood his own son's…or, for that matter, any artist's."

[114] Wright, 13, in *The Harvard Years*. Wright, in effect, obliquely acknowledges the significance of this group himself in the very same way when he went on to note: "No wonder Bernstein was so hard on [George Whitefield] Chadwick, and so tepid in his praise of Piston: through no fault of their own, they symbolized that restrictive, disciplinarian Sam-world he grew up in, the cocoon he would have to rip open before he could fly free over New York and the world."

to those such as Bernstein's father. New York, then, was simply representative of a greater political landscape in which the majority of these musical movers and shakers felt most at ease with having taken this step, and where Bernstein likewise would come to feel most at home.

In the fall of 1939, on the advice of Copland and Mitropoulos, Bernstein continued his musical education at the Curtis Institute.[115] Established only fifteen years before, the school was free of the constraints imposed by longstanding traditionalism, yet Bernstein also was dismayed to find it lacked the intellectual rigor to which he had grown accustomed at Harvard. The up-and-coming composer undertook piano studies under the authoritarian Isabelle Vengerova and score-reading with Renée Longy Miquelle; more significantly, he began his first conducting studies under Fritz Reiner. Renowned for his economical approach, Reiner provided Bernstein with an important basis in the art of interpretation, strictly encouraging his students to commit entire scores to memory. Bernstein thrived under Reiner's stern guidance, quickly rising through the ranks to be considered something of a *Wunderkind* among his peers due to his impressive sight-reading abilities and astute memory for large portions of music. Reiner provided the discipline that benefited the capricious Bernstein, and under his tutelage, the latter cultivated a strong foundation in conducting that would serve him well, and which he would soon build upon with perhaps the most significant figure in his musical education.

On the recommendations of Blitzstein, Copland, and Mitropoulos, Bernstein was next accepted into the conducting studio of Serge Koussevitzky, who had only just founded the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood in Massachusetts. For the next two summers, Bernstein blossomed into a talented conductor under the tutelage of the man

[115] Blitzstein may too have played a role, for he had once studied composition there.

who would serve as his principal mentor in the field. At the close of the second summer in 1942, he received positive reviews for his conducting of the Boston Pops Orchestra at Tanglewood—quite a coup for an up-and-coming conductor. It is of little surprise that once given the opportunity the following year, as the assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic, Bernstein would gain worldwide acclaim when he was famously invited to step into the shoes of the ailing guest conductor Bruno Walter for a nationally broadcasted concert when music director Artur Rodziński was otherwise disposed. The Sunday following, Bernstein was asked to conduct Ernest Bloch's *Three Jewish Poems.* "We will be thrilled to hear you on the radio…" his mother wrote proudly.[116] "I'm sure most of the Jews in the country will be listening to you so do your best, dear."[117] As it turned out, Bernstein's mother had no need to worry: her son was keenly aware of the gravity of being the world's up-and-coming Jewish American conductor. Following these successes, Bernstein's stock continued to rise as more opportunities poured in: one of the most enticing invitations, of course, would soon arrive from the budding Palestine Symphony Orchestra.

Bernstein's prospects as a composer were likewise rising during this period, and some of the most significant works that date from this time reflect the composer's growing need to express his Judaism musically: his Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah*, seems a direct reaction to Nazi abuses. Bernstein premiered the work at the Syria Mosque with Reiner's Pittsburgh Symphony on 28 January 1944. Dedicated to Sam following an emotional reconciliation between father and son after the New York Philharmonic conducting debut, the symphony held a great deal of raw feeling from its composer

[116] Burton, 122.
[117] Ibid.

concerning the long-standing persecution of his people.[118] "How can I be blind to the problems of my own people? I'd give everything I have to be able to strike a death blow at Fascism," Bernstein had proclaimed several months earlier in the *New York Journal American*.[119] As he himself put it:

> The intention is…not one of literalness, but of emotional quality. Thus the first movement ('Prophecy') aims only to parallel in feeling the intensity of the prophet's pleas with his people; and the Scherzo ('Profanation') to give a general sense of the destruction and chaos brought on by the pagan corruption within the priesthood and the people. The third movement ('Lamentation'), being a setting of poetic text, is naturally a more literary conception. It is the cry of Jeremiah, as he mourns his beloved Jerusalem, ruined, pillaged and dishonored after his desperate efforts to save it.[120]

Musically, the work derived from a sketch Bernstein had drafted following his graduation from Harvard in the summer of 1939, which he called a "Hebrew song," based on text from the Torah's Book of Lamentations.[121] As Bernstein himself admitted, however, the music was only loosely inspired by—rather than based on—Jewish musical material:

> The Symphony does not make use to any great extent of actual Hebrew thematic material. The first theme of the Scherzo is paraphrased from a traditional Hebrew chant, and the opening phrase of the vocal part in the Lamentation is based on a liturgical cadence still sung today in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Other resemblances to Hebrew liturgical music are a matter of emotional quality rather than of the notes themselves.[122]

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[118] Kate Chisholm, "Symphony No. 1: Jeremiah," Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc., <http://www.leonardbernstein.com/works_jeremiah.htm>, accessed 19 May 2014. Kate Chisholm, Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[119] Burton, 123. This statement on Bernstein's part is, of course, rather ironic in light of his earlier efforts to avoid being called to war against the Nazi regime himself. To read more about Bernstein's relief at not having to serve, as expressed to Aaron Copland, see Leonard Bernstein to Aaron Copland, Autumn 1941, as quoted in Simeone, ed., 83.

[120] "Symphony no. 1, Jeremiah." Kate Chisholm, Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[121] Ibid. Kate Chisholm, Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. The book represents a series of poetic laments concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of Babylon in sixth century BCE.

[122] Ibid. Kate Chisholm, Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

The symphony, far more "spiritually American" in its musical vocabulary, did possess a Jewish musical quality and would garner widespread appeal; today, it is one of Bernstein's most frequently performed orchestral works. The composer-conductor would come to lead orchestras around the world in performing the symphony: most symbolically, he would go on to the lead the work in a Jerusalem concert by the Palestine Symphony in 1947.

Bernstein was likewise composing Jewish-themed choral works during this period. In 1945, he penned the choral work *Hashkiveinu*, based on the Hebrew liturgical text of the same name, sung during all evening services. Commissioned by Cantor David Putterman, it premiered at the lavish Park Avenue Synagogue on 11 May 1945, eleven days after Adolf Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker and a mere three days following Germany's unconditional surrender. The three-part work—which gives an early nod to the sort of choral and organ writing prominent in Bernstein's *Mass: A Theater Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers* (1971)—features a rhythmically vital middle section so typical of his compositional language, flanked by two harmonically inventive slow-tempo segments. As one would expect from this innate dramatist, Bernstein's structural decision was based largely on the character of the text. As Jack Gottlieb observed:

> The words are meditative in the first and third sections, and vociferously dramatic in the middle. The outer parts concern the hoped-for mood of peace upon retiring for the evening—the first in the form of an invocation, the second as a benediction. These have been set with the same simple expressive melody, almost a plainchant in the Phrygian mode, and stated as a twofold canon. Despite the contrapuntal texture, this creates a stasis, resulting in a heterophony that symbolically mirrors the stability of peace. Although the arch (middle) section is rhythmically vigorous, the harmonic content remains relatively static. The tripartite formal division establishes the contrast between outer and inner designs.

> Within the adagio phrases on either end, supporting pillars to the architectural plan, each of the three sections is further subdivided into three sections, delineated by tempo markings.[123]

Gottlieb also cites a poem that Bernstein wrote which reveals his frustration with the compositional process:

> Oh deign, foolish Muse
> To sit upon my shoulder,
> I've got to sing a Blues
> Ere I am one week older.
> The trouble of the Jews
> In my dear guts does smolder
> But sparkless is the fuse:
> My writing arm grows colder.
> I ask not, stupid Muse,
> For a *Tristan and Isolde,*
> Just a small Berceuse —
> But ere I'm one week older!!![124]

From all accounts, it seems fair to suppose that Bernstein put a great deal of pressure on himself to be the "right" type of vessel for Judaism in his compositional activities. Another undated memo concerning an intended manuscript, "A Cantata on Hebrew-Yiddish Materials that Move Me," reveals the same variety of agony:

> What are the Jewish roots I long for? Nostalgia for youth? Guilt towards my father? First real cultural exposure? First real music I heard (Braslavsky!). Seeking a larger identity—with a race or creed?—with a supernatural force? (But the latter word doesn't account for so many "Yiddish" responses.) Seeking any identity? Common roots with siblings? Speaker (English), the singer (Heb. & Yiddish).[125]

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[123] Jack Gottlieb, Liner Notes, *Bernstein: A Jewish Legacy,* with Israelite Chorus, Naxos and the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music 8.559407, CD, 2003.
[124] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[125] Leonard Bernstein, re: "A Cantata on Hebrew-Yiddish Musical Materials that Move Me," n.d., Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 78, Folder 1. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. Bernstein is referring to Solomon Braslavsky, the organist and music director of Temple Mishkan Tefila. The influence of Bernstein's experiences at the synagogue have already been noted in part; for the most complete record, see Ann Glazer Niren, "The Relationship Between Solomon Braslavsky, Congregation Mishkan Tefila, and Leonard Bernstein," (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2013).

Indeed, this document reveals a force somewhat beyond Bernstein's conscious understanding: a force that was to leave him constantly yearning to bring forth a tangible outward manifestation of his inward searching. For the greater part of his life, Bernstein would persevere in his quest to bare before the world the deep meaning of his Judaism and of his very Jewishness. Perhaps it was this same "supernatural force" that resided within Bernstein—a need propelled by deeply ingrained emotionality extending far beyond logical constructs—that would compel him to travel to Israel in search of his these very "Jewish roots" for which he longed.

The Jewish Nation and its Orchestra

Precursors to Zionism: Humanism, The Enlightenment and Beyond

The Jewish diasporic peoples of Europe, representing an extensive array of ethnic backgrounds, religious practices, cultural traditions, and nationalities, did share one glaring commonality: widespread persecution at the hands of their Gentile neighbors, and largely at the hands of their rulers. Much is known of the atrocities that were committed throughout the Middle Ages and beyond;[126] however, for the sake of understanding the advent of the Zionist movement and the ultimate establishment of the State of Israel, my examination of this history will begin with a brief discussion of the cultural upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe.

[126] For a thorough and penetrating discussion of Jewish-Gentile relations in Medieval Europe, please consult Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, wide dissemination of literature had been possible for centuries; an ever-growing number of universities had been springing up since the beginning of the Humanist era, and the children of both aristocrats and the rising middle class were pursuing an academic education in higher numbers than ever before. Prominent seventeenth-century philosophers—perhaps the most significant being John Locke[127] and Baruch Spinoza[128]—had likewise contributed significantly to ushering in the Age of Enlightenment, a philosophical and cultural movement that promoted intellectual pursuits (particularly for men, but also for women to an extent), religious freedom, equality, and reason.[129]

The key philosophical figures of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment period that proceeded those of Humanism eventually served as catalysts for a new attitude toward the Jews. One of the most significant philosophers of the era, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), expressed a far more sympathetic view toward Christian-perpetrated Jewish

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[127] Locke's most pointed admonishment of religious intolerance can be found in his seminal 1689 work, "A Letter Concerning Toleration." In it, he states the following: "…No private person has any right in any manner to prejudice another person in his civil enjoyments because he is of another church or religion….These are not the business of religion. No violence nor injury is to be offered him, whether he be Christian or Pagan…nor therefore art thou to punish him in the things of this life because thou supposest he will be miserable in that which is to come…Nobody, therefore, in fine, neither single persons nor churches, nay, nor even commonwealths, have any just title to invade the civil rights and worldly goods of each other upon pretense of religion…No peace and security, no, not so much as common friendship, can ever be established or preserved amongst men so long as propagated by force of arms." John Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration," <http://press pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/ amendI_religions10 .html>, *The Founders' Constitution,* Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, eds., accessed 3 March 2013.

[128] Spinoza's ancestors were Sephardic Jews. Born in Amsterdam, he was raised among a cloistered Portuguese Jewish community who had been forcibly expelled from the Iberian Peninsula to the Dutch Republic. Ultimately, he was excommunicated for reasons that remain vague based on surviving documents. However, as scholar Steven Nadler rightfully asserts: "No doubt he was giving utterance to just those ideas that would soon appear in his philosophical treatises [including his *magnum opus*, *Ethics* (1677)]. In those works, Spinoza denies the immortality of the soul; strongly rejects the notion of a providential God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and claims that the Law was neither literally given by God nor any longer binding on Jews. Can there be any mystery as to why one of history's boldest and most radical thinkers was sanctioned by an orthodox Jewish community?" Steven Nadler, "Baruch Spinoza," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza/>, accessed 12 March 2015.

[129] Enlightenment thinkers also voiced strong opposition to both past and present abuses of power, persecution, and rampant corruption within the Roman Catholic establishment.

prejudice.[130] Incensed by the influence of the Roman Catholic establishment upon European life, he envisioned a society in which the far-reaching grasp of the Vatican no longer superseded the rights of the individual; he also rejected violence as a solution to ending political conflict. In one of his most renowned works, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, or *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1754), Rousseau makes an impassioned appeal against exclusion:

> The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said "This is mine," and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.[131]

Rousseau additionally commented directly on injustices against the Jews in his revered *Emile,* taking a dig at the so-called blasphemy that the Christian church used as its justification to persecute the Jews: "The tyranny practiced against [the Jews] makes them fearful…I shall never believe that I have seriously heard the arguments of the Jews until they have a free state, schools, and universities, where they can speak and dispute without risk. Only then will we know what they have to say."[132]

Despite Rousseau's generally sympathetic stance toward the Jews, his remarks, seen in context, are not as much of a reflection of his affinity for the Jewish people as they are fodder for his scathing criticism of Christianity: as Rousseau further argues in *Emile*, "the one which accepts two and rejects the third may very well be the best, but it

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[130] For more on this topic, please see Jonathan D. Marks, "Rousseau's Use of the Jewish Example," *The Review of Politics* 72:3 (Summer 2010), 463-481.
[131] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, translated by George D.H. Cole (Whitefish, Montana: 2004), 41.
[140] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, translated by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 310.
[141] Ibid., 304.

has all the prejudices against it. The inconsistency leaps to the eyes."[133]Anthropologist Jonathan Marks has recently commented on the dichotomous nature of Rousseau's philosophical writings:

> Judaism, with its multiplicity of laws, seems incompatible with the stripped down religion that Rousseau appears to favor. Civil religion, the religion of the citizen, should be characterized by a few simple dogmas, including the existence of a providential God, the afterlife, the happiness of the just, and the punishment of the wicked. Natural religion, the religion of the human being, is derived from just three articles of faith, that the universe is moved by a will, that the will is intelligent, and that human beings are free and moved by an immaterial substance. It is hard to see how Rousseau, who praises a religion with which a Jefferson or Franklin might have been content, can praise Judaism, which appears to encompass and demand so much more than the religion he otherwise endorses.[142]

The sentiments expressed regarding Judaism by the key figures of the Enlightenment were both complex and contradictory;[143] nevertheless, these ideas did began to pave the way for egalitarianism among the Jewish diaspora of Europe, numbering roughly 2,250,000 people by the end of the eighteenth century, or approximately ninety percent of the world's Jewish population.[144] It was, however, to be the French Revolution that ushered in the most profound changes prior to date. In 1789, Clermont Tonnere (1757-1792) succeeded in his adamant insistence to the French National Assembly that Jews should no longer be denied any of the rights afforded to their Gentile neighbors.[134] Thus, France became the first European nation to grant its

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[142] Jonathan D. Marks, "Rousseau and the Jews," MPSA Annual National Conference, Chicago, 2012, <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p267476_index.html>, accessed 12 July 2013.

[143] Voltaire (1694-1778)—one of the most influential proponents of the Enlightenment philosophy of religious tolerance—offers a window into the paradoxical nature of the movement, with the anti-Semitic views he so often expressed standing in direct contrast to the ideals he championed. Standing at the crux of an era seminal in paving the way to Jewish freedoms in Europe, and particularly in his native France, Voltaire did acknowledge the Jewish religion to be the most tolerant of the three monotheistic faiths; nonetheless, his comments against the Jews were scathing in his revered *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764).

[138] Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 4. Despite his advocacy for the Jewish residents of France, it should also be noted that while Tonnere championed the rights of Jews as individuals of the state, he was adamant that that cloistered communities must assimilate

Jewish citizens something approaching equality, and other nations slowly followed in loosening restrictions: in Prussia under the reign of King William II (1744-1797), Jews were permitted to enter the army and obtain professorships in universities after being declared equals to their Christian counterparts.[135] Many of these rights, however, were revoked shortly thereafter, with Jewish citizens being barred from a number of professions, including military service.[136] And while Napoleon initially dissolved the Jewish ghettos, he later restored them during his reign.[137] The progress that followed was slow-moving, and occurred over the span of more than a century: it would be 1850 before Jews were granted equality as citizens in Prussia; 1874 in Switzerland; 1890 in Great Britain; 1908 in the Ottoman Empire; 1917 in Russia.[138] Such proclamations, of course, were rarely strictly observed, and persecution remained widespread. Frustrations were mounting, and they would soon find an outlet in the form of a political crusade that would mark the start a new chapter in the story of Jewry in Europe.

A Movement is Born: Theodor Herzl and the Founders of Zionism

After centuries of persecution, the need to pursue a solution to the long-suffered policies of living as an alien, exiled Jewish other under European rule found formal voice in Theodor Herzl's landmark *Der Judenstaat* (1896), initially published in Germany and Austria. Notable for its straight-forward directive to Jews to galvanize themselves and

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themselves amongst the French population at large, abiding by French law and banishing Jewish religious courts.

[135] "Prussia," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12405-prussia>, accessed 13 June 2013.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Laqueur, 4.

[138] Ibid., 5.

take their destiny into their own hands, the work captured international attention, inspiring praise and revulsion alike. Herzl's solution to what he explained as "the plight of the Jews" was both bold and, from his standpoint, practical: the establishment of a permanent Jewish homeland in the form of a nation-state, preferably in the hallowed land of Palestine, that would permanently safeguard the Jewish people from further injustice. "I believe it is possible to bring the idea to a reality," Herzl declares in the opening of the work, "even though I do not pretend to have found it in its final form. The world needs the Jews' State; consequently it will come about."[139] Although he recognizes the notion will seem highly improbable to many, "if this attempt to solve the issues of the Jews is to be characterized in one word, then it should be not be called 'fantasy,' at most it may be called a 'project.'"[140] This "project," as Herzl envisions it, is not as far-fetched as it might seem at the outset. "If pursued by a single individual, this idea would be insane," Herzl admits,

> but if many Jews get involved at the same time, it is completely rational, and bringing it to fruition poses no difficulties to speak of. The idea merely depends on how many people support it. Perhaps our ambitious young people, to whom all avenues have been blocked and to whom the Jew's State offers the prospect of honor, freedom and happiness, perhaps they will take on the task of spreading the idea about…Are the sufferings of the Jews not yet great enough? We shall see. At any rate, it depends on the Jews themselves whether for the time being this paper represents political fact or political fiction. If the present generation is still too apathetic, then another, higher, better one will come. Those Jews who want it will have their state and they will deserve it.[141]

No one could have imagined how prophetic Herzl's words would prove to be, so candidly stated a mere fifty-three years before the establishment of the Jewish State. No one perhaps, save for those who believed as strongly in his cause as he did—and were willing

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[139] Theodor Herzl , *The Jews' State: A Critical English Translation,* translation and introduction by Henk Overberg (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997), 125.
[140] Ibid., 123.
[141] Ibid., 126.

to do whatever it took to see it bear fruit. Quickly, those who adhered to Herzl's thinking set their sights on Palestine, or as it had been traditionally named in scripture, *Eretz Yisrael* ("the land of Israel").

Although Herzl's ideas were certainly not novel to those who moved in similar circles, the publication and ensuing dialogue it created nonetheless had a rousing effect on the Jewish populace of Europe. In the years following the publication of *Der Judenstaat*, the first wave of immigrations was well underway, with those who were able to afford it journeying to Palestine to purchase land from the indigenous Arab population; the more land that could be acquired and the larger stake the Jews had in the region, the more likely they would eventually have the power to loosen the Ottoman Empire's grip over the territory they hoped to someday designate as their own. By 1909, they had already laid claim to their first stronghold in the region in the form of a large area of undeveloped land on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, situated on the outskirts of the ancient port city of Jaffa. The settlers named it Tel Aviv, or "hill of Spring" in Hebrew. In the decades that followed, the city grew exponentially. Today a bustling, progressive municipality of European ambience, for all its vitality, Tel Aviv appears to the casual visitor a world away from the conflicts unfolding only fifty-five kilometers southeast in the disputed West Bank region.

But even as the fervor emanating toward the Middle East from European Jews escalated, there were those deeply involved in the Zionist movement who were not blind to the potential problems of settling a land already steeped in the rich cultural history of the people who had up until now inhabited it for thousands of years. Even prior to the publication of *Der Judenstaat*, concerns arose regarding the methods by which the Jews

sought to acquire their own homeland. After his own visit to Palestine, Ahad Ha'am, one of the foremost thinkers of the Zionist movement, was so troubled by the experience that in 1891, he published an essay entitled "*Emet M'Eretz Y'Israel*," or "Truth from *Eretz Yisrael*," which is little-known today. Discussing not only the practical logistical problems of establishing a Jewish state in Israel as posed by mass immigration, he also tackled the ethical dilemma created by the existing population. "I know full well that my words will infuriate many against me," Ha'am lamented, "but I consider it a sacred task to publish the truth."[142] One of the greatest advocates of Zionism, in evenly assessing its trajectory as it unfolded in real time, Ha'am found himself in the role of one of its significant internal critics as he lambasted the hypocrisy of his own people. "There is certainly one thing we could have learned from our *past and present* history: how careful we must be not to arouse the anger of other people against ourselves by reprehensible conduct," Ha'am cautions.

> How much more, then, should we be careful, in our conduct towards a foreign people among whom we live once again, to walk together in love and respect, and needless to say in justice and righteousness. And what do our brethren in Eretz Yisrael do? Quite the opposite! They were slaves in their land of exile, and they suddenly find themselves with unlimited freedom…This sudden change has engendered in them an impulse to despotism, as always happens when "a slave becomes a king," and behold they walk with the Arabs in hostility, cruelty, unjustly encroaching on them, shamefully beating them for no good reason, and even bragging about what they do, and there is no one to stand in the breach and call a halt to this dangerous and despicable impulse.[143]

Ultimately, Ha'am was correct that his opinion would be met with scorn, and despite the multitude of concerns involved in the enterprise of pursuing the Jewish State in Palestine, voices of dissent were ultimately stifled by the still louder outcry of those who

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[142] Alan Dowty, Ahad Ha'am, and Asher Ginzberg, "Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael,' Zionism, and the Arabs, *Israel Studies* 5:2 (Fall 2000), 154-181. This article includes the first English translation of the full text of Ha'am's original essay.
[143] Ibid.

vehemently protested against the continued acceptance of the intolerable status quo that marked European life for the average Jew.

Changing Tides: Balfour, the British Mandate and the Rise of Adolf Hitler

A major breakthrough for the Zionist cause came when, on 2 November 1917, Britain's Foreign Secretary James Balfour sent a letter to Walter Rothschild, a former politician and prominent British Zionist, indicating the government's willingness to support the advent of a Jewish state in Palestine. The contents of the letter were quickly channeled to the press, and the correspondence became known as the Balfour Declaration. The most significant portion of the document reads as follows:

> His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.[144]

This declaration, however, quickly proved to be more than just a verbal assurance. Even as its ultimate victory in the Great War remained uncertain, on 9 December 1917, British forces led by General Edmund Allenby captured Jerusalem from the Turks; by 1918, the British Empire held Palestine in its entirety. A further significant development came only four years later when the League of Nations granted Britain the Mandate for Palestine—now known as the British Mandate—which entrusted them to facilitate the development of a Jewish homeland in the region.

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[144] "Pre-State Israel: The Balfour Declaration," Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/baltoc.html>, accessed 8 November 2014.

As the Jews of Palestine faced the logistical and human difficulties of forging a nation under the umbrella of British rule, European Jews were up against far more menacing issues. In the continued fallout from World War I, Germany was in a precarious and largely lawless state, with various factions—including the Communist party—vying for control of the nation's government. Anti-Semitic groups such as the Thule Society targeted the Jews for harassment, associating them with the perceived Communist menace. Adolf Hitler, the central figure to arise from this faction, made no apologies about his desire to eliminate the Jews from public life in Germany. Still furious about the harsh penalties inflicted on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and with anti-Semitism rampant, even moderates were all too often willing to discount the vitriol Hitler spouted against the Jews in favor of lauding his promises to return Germany to its former state of glory on the continent.

In light of increasing measures against the Jews in Germany following Hitler's rise to the chancellorship in 1933, many more families—at least, among those who could afford it—were persuaded that life on the continent held nothing else for them, and that immigration to Palestine was the most viable alternative. Consequently, the Zionist cause was beginning to gain further traction. With their goal of a Jewish state now visible on the horizon, however, elements of the movement were willing to make unsettling sacrifices in order to see their larger aims realized. In the wake of *Kristallnacht* in 1938—in which the Jews experienced widespread violence and vandalism at the hands of their Nazi persecutors—David Ben-Gurion commented on an offer from the British to admit a sizeable number of Jewish children into their borders:

> If I knew it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them to England, and only half of them by transporting them to *Eretz Yisrael*, then I would opt for the second alternative, for we must weigh not only the life of these children but also the history of the people of Israel.[145]

Implicit in Ben-Gurion's inflammatory statement, of course, is that the importance of establishing the future of the Jewish state now superseded that of individual life, even when the lives in question were those of the Jews themselves.

From the Abyss: World War II, the Fall of an Empire, and the Birth of a Nation

By 1936, Palestine was thrown into crisis by the Arab Revolt. Unfolding over the span of the next three years, the nationalist uprisings were staged in opposition to British rule of the region, particularly in regard to the policies that had allowed mass immigration of the Jews to Palestine. Initially, a solution was offered by the British government in which the territory would be partitioned between the Jews and the Arabs. As tensions continued to escalate, however, it grew apparent that a governmental partition would not quell further strife in Britain's new problematic colony. Further, positive relations between Britain and the Arab world—needed to secure access and transport of oil, for one—were in danger of being irreparably compromised the longer the situation was allowed to continue. And there was a further problem: Hitler had claimed the land of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939 with little resistance from any major European power; now, he was vying for Poland. The British government, aware of the flimsy peace Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had secured via the Munich Pact with

[145] As quoted in Joseph Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 87.

Hitler the previous year, knew they would have to take a firm stand when it came to their Polish allies.

With war seen as a near inevitability, Chamberlain's government published the White Paper of 1939 in May of that year, effectively rescinding its previous offers to the Palestinian Jews and dealing a blow to the Zionist movement. Among other things, the White Paper decreed that the British no longer intended to partition Palestine in favor of a Jewish State, and provided as an alternative joint rule of the territory between the Jews and Arabs proportionate to their numbers in the population. Furthermore, it placed restrictions on Jewish land purchases from Arabs and regulated further immigration over the next five years, installing a quota of 10,000 per year. "After the period of five years," the document decreed, "no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it."[146] Although outraged, the Zionists temporarily shifted their focus to the larger enemy of Nazism, with approximately 27,000 Jews ultimately enlisting in the British Army.[147] In response to this policy, Ben-Gurion, then-leader of the Jewish Agency for Palestine promised: "We shall fight the war against Hitler as if there were no White Paper, and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war."[148]

Throughout the entirety of the war, the Palestinian Jews were in a relative state of stalemate, controlled remotely by the British Empire, unable to strike militarily against British forces so long as Hitler continued so doggedly to pursue his pathological agenda against the Jews of Europe. While those within the Allied governments were certainly

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[146] "British White Paper of 1939," Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/paper39.html>, accessed 15 November 2014.
[147] Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 88.
[148] Ibid.

aware of the concentration camps, they ultimately had not intervened directly with targeted military strikes against either the camps or the railway lines that led to them. When they were finally liberated in 1945, the world could do nothing but stand by in horror as the depravity and depth of the atrocities committed against the Jews of Europe—and all others who Hitler deemed undesirable—were revealed. Certainly, the tenor of world opinion was such that many factions were growing more sympathetic toward the need for a nation in which the Jews could at last be free of persecution.

In 1946, the governments of Britain and the United States sought to probe the issue by forming the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. Their report ultimately pleaded for tolerance between the two factions and sought to establish two separate states within the region, recommending that the United Nations be tasked with mediating the dilemma; the committee also dissolved the previous restrictions on the purchase of Arab land and allowed for the immigration of at least 100,000 displaced Jews to the region. None of the parties involved—including the British, but particularly the Arabs—were satisfied with the ultimate outcome. With Jewish terrorism against the occupying British forces rampant by courtesy of the Irgun (a militant group that will be revisited in connection to Bernstein in the upcoming chapter), and frequent outbreaks of violence between the Arabs and Jews in the area, relations between all three parties had deteriorated sharply by 1947. In April of that year, the British government requested that the United Nations take control of the situation in Palestine. Years earlier, Adolf Hitler had predicted that a Second World War would ultimately serve to break the British Empire. Although his prediction was in part wishful thinking, he had nonetheless been correct; Britain's colonies would begin to fall one by one over the ensuing decade. In the

post-war era, the geopolitical power structure of the world shifted vastly and decisively in favor of the United States. This is significant in light of the relationship Israel would ultimately seek with what was to become her strongest ally.

Ultimately, the United Nations efforts to advance a mutually agreeable partition plan were a dismal failure, and on 14 May 1948, the provisional government of the new Jewish State officially declared Israeli statehood; President Harry S. Truman, no doubt affected by the tragedy of the Holocaust, reacted nearly immediately by officially recognizing Israel's existence that same day, in spite of staunch warnings from his own State Department to exercise moderation out of concern for future American-Arab relations. For their part, Arab forces responded almost as quickly by declaring war, beginning a protracted and bloody battle for the land that in many ways, persists to the present. By the time of the Six-Day War in 1967, however, Israel had established a firm hold over the region.

Growing Pains: The New Israeli and the Palestine Symphony Orchestra

With the Jewish nation now a reality and not simply a conceptual dream, its leaders—and its ordinary citizens—had many issues to negotiate. What did it mean to be a "Jewish state"? What traits and actions taken by or on behalf of its population could instill a sense of national identity that coincided with the Zionist vision for the state of Israel? Just as Benbassa and Attias described the concept of the modern Jew, they likewise described how a different, related concept of a New Jew transformed by modernity had been embraced by the early founders of the new Israel:

> Zionism summoned its adherents to make a more radical change of direction. With its advent, Judaism strove to disappear as a theological and historical exception so that it might be reborn as a simple demand for nationhood. The Jewish people was summoned to become fully itself while at last establishing balanced relations with the rest of the world; it was to do so, in Zionist perspective, by achieving normalcy, that is by coming to resemble all the other nations, with a territory and state. The builders of the nation set out to forge a new Jew*,* a Jew who, after returning to his own country, would no longer feel the least nostalgia for the experience of exile or the least attachment to the land of his birth. This new Jew was summoned to become an Israeli.[149]

The new Israel—assimilated with its nation-state others on the world stage—was, like the United States, to serve as the home of a new Jew. With his primary allegiance to the state of Israel, this New Jew could forget both the heritage and persecution experienced in the country of his origin and just be; free of the shackles of his past, he could be allowed to exist in a new land in which he and his brethren were at last united on a shared soil.

The problem with this utopian view, of course, is that it is wholly contradictory. It was, after all, a shared struggle born of generations past that had united the Zionists to seek a land that for them was so steeped in history. A concept that had helped to define his state of otherness for so long, Israel was no longer divorceable from the various lands of exile from whence the diasporic Jew looked up to exalt the land which had once been the home of his ancestors. The Zionist New Jew in Palestine could perhaps be more precisely termed the New Israeli: an identity that would come to be defined by the struggles that had given rise to the Zionist movement in the first place. As Benbassa and Attias have explained,

> Israel was unable to break with either its past or the Diaspora, the mother who had nursed it…The Israelis were once again to identify with their own Jewishness, down to the very appropriation of the experience of the Holocaust, which they had rejected for a moment—a brief one, to be sure—in hopes of attaining the

[149] Benbassa and Attias, 38.

> Israeliness the founding fathers had so desired. Hence the memory of the Diaspora inevitably became part of the identity of the Israeli…Without the Diaspora, there can be no Jewishness—and no Israeliness either.[150]

Although Bernstein would himself come to romanticize the concept of a New Israeli, transformed by finally being freed from his former state of persecution, the tables had simply been turned. The Israeli struggle and that of her nation was not unlike that of Bernstein himself. On the micro level, the Israeli was drawn to the foreign land of his or her birth in search of the diasporic roots that had once compelled the Zionist movement; meanwhile, the Israeli state was embroiled in a struggle for legitimacy and acceptance that had once been the struggle of the exiled Jew in Western society. While desperate to keep herself separate from the rest of the world as the Jewish State, Israel was likewise compelled to reach out to her fellow nations; to let them know that, as the Jews of Europe had once so wished to do, she was simply different—not alien. One modality of doing this was through the universal language of music. Perhaps with an orchestra of worldwide acclaim, the Jewish nation could at last connect in a meaningful way to the world at large and gain sympathy for her cause.

The Palestine Symphony Orchestra came into being during a turbulent time in Jewish history. Founded in 1936 by Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman, it quickly became a refuge for Jewish musicians who had lost their jobs in European orchestras. From the beginning, it was apparent that this would be no ordinary orchestra. Just as his forefathers had done decades earlier in declaring the formation of the city of Tel Aviv, Huberman symbolically took to the dunes of the Mediterranean, declaring the orchestra

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[150] Ibid., 41.

the product of the "materialization of the Zionist culture in the fatherland."[151] Yet Huberman also saw the ensemble as an embodiment of high cultural values that would represent the Jewish state before the world. "I don't know whether the people in Palestine are aware of it," Huberman wrote to Colonel Frederick Kisch, a prominent Zionist leader and British army officer:

> [For] me the main aspect of the orchestra (as so many factors in Zionism in general) is not the local Zionistic one neither that of charity; it is the outlook of the prestige of World Jewry and of its cultural defence against the ignominious lies of Hitlerism which counters most for me and my financial sponsors. Because we are all aware that this orchestra, with the aid of universal broadcasts, international festivals in Palestine, and tours to foreign countries will have a more immediate appeal and effect in the world than any other cultural institution in Palestine, no matter how important or successful in the long run. This platform of universality with its implications of the most sublimated type of fight and defense has enabled me to win the support of Toscanini. Now we must live up to it, even if the effort would seem out of proportion to the means of the country—as long as the Jewish world supplies us with the necessary surplus.[152]

Though not Jewish himself, Arturo Toscanini would indeed support the orchestra publicly in the most emphatic of terms: by donating his services as conductor to the Palestine Symphony's inaugural concert on 26 December 1936. Protesting Fascist Italy's anti-Semitic position as "Medieval stuff," Toscanini was dubbed an "honorary Jew" by the press upon his return to Italy, and his passport was revoked in part due to his role in the birth of the ensemble.[153] Of his decision "to render paternal care to the newly born"—to the first Jewish orchestra, formed in the face of Hitlerian persecutions—Toscanini dramatically proclaimed: "I am doing this for humanity."[154]

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[151] "The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra: Seven Decades of Musical History," Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, <http://www.ipo.co.il/eng/About/History/.aspx>, accessed 25 November 2014.
[152] Ida Ibbeken and Tzi Avni, eds. *An Orchestra is Born: A Monument to Bronislaw Huberman* (Tel Aviv, Israel: Yachdav United Publishers, 1969), 28.
[153] Mortimer H. Frank, *Arturo Toscanini: The NBC Years* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2003), 47. With relations with Mussolini already strained prior to the Palestine trip, Toscanini would ultimately elect to leave Italy for the United States.
[154] "The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra: Seven Decades of Musical History."

Receiving a significant boost from the Maestro's baton, the orchestra soon persuaded other conductors to follow: Bernadino Molinari, William Steinberg, Issay Dobrowen, Sir Malcolm Sargent, and eventually, Leonard Bernstein. Still finding his way at Harvard at the time of Toscanini's appearance with the orchestra and unable to foresee his ultimate station in the musical world, the bold and brilliant would-be conductor was soon to burst upon the international scene, taking America—and Palestine—by storm. In the decade that followed, the orchestra would achieve new landmarks under Bernstein's leadership; for his part, Bernstein would become torn between the nation of his birth—a land which had given both he and his father so many opportunities as assimilated Jews—and the land of his Abrahamic ancestors, or as he would come to think of it, his second home.

Chapter Two: The Age of Anxiety, 1946-1950

"I feel that I shall spend more and more time here [in Israel] each year. It makes running around the cities of America seem so unimportant—as if I am not really needed there, while I am really needed here!"

- Leonard Bernstein to Serge Koussevitzky, 1948

"I never played such an Adagio. I thought it was my swan song."

- Leonard Bernstein, on performing Beethoven near Tel Aviv during an approaching air raid, 1948

In his "Dialogue and…" from April of 1948, Leonard Bernstein recounted his conversation with a French roommate in his cabin while aboard the Queen Mary at the start of what was presumably his second voyage to the land of Israel, by now on the cusp of its "War of Independence," or the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. As Bernstein tells it, "Léon Trirème" engages him in a complex dialogue concerning his personal and political motives for undertaking such a journey:

> L.T.: Don't tell me! What an internationalist you're turning out to be! American, citizen of the world, tying up with the most nationalistic movement on earth! Are you a Zionist?
> L.B.: Not with a capital Z, at any rate. But I can't think of anything I feel more strongly about. It took me a good long while to make up my mind, I admit…It meant giving up…well, I won't bore you with details. But in the end I couldn't resist it any longer.
> L.T.: Resist what?
> L.B.: Resist the temptation of being able to help. That's a weakness we all share—the desire to go where we're really wanted and needed.[1]

Whether or not this dialogue represents a real conversation that occurred only in part—or perhaps even not at all—its significance remains unchanged. For Bernstein, as he puts it, was faced increasingly with "a conflict many of [his] Jewish friends have shared with

[1] Leonard Bernstein, "Dialogue and…" in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 112. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. Quotations in epigraph used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[him]."[2] During these early years of conflict, he would be forced to negotiate the degree to which he could lend his support to a nationalist Jewish state with highly individualized goals while still maintaining his own integrity as a left-wing internationalist and assimilated New Jew of the United States.

While Bernstein's liberal bonafides were well-formed and established by this time, his pull to the world of family tradition remained firmly a part of his identity; thus, the nation that perhaps came to represent a geographical manifestation of this treasured segment of his spirit would also remain a sizeable part of his life. Benbassa and Attias have described this internal conflict as follows:

> Will it be objected that the Jew is a cosmopolitan?... Is it exile that made him so permeable? Even after he has ceased to be cosmopolitan, and, having gone back to the land that God once promised him, [he] counts it as his duty to cease to be one—even today, in the modern state of Israel, the Jew carries his land of origin in his baggage.[3]

And yet, was it only Bernstein's traditionalist Jewish sensibilities—his deep-seated yearning to share in the struggles and triumphs of his people—that led him to take a firm stand against the too-long tolerated persecution of centuries, culminating in the Final Solution under the Nazis, by lending his support to Israel? Indeed, all of these were likely motivations, but there is another highly important factor that is less obvious at first look.

This guiding force, which was perhaps of primary significance, although far less conscious on Bernstein's part, is illuminated well in the continuation of his conversation with Trirème:

> L.T.: But help how? You're not going to shoot—
> L.B.: No. To help morale, to help in the development of Palestinian music, to help a new civilization come through.

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[2] Ibid., 114. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[3] Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias*, The Jew and the Other* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2004), 8.

> […]
> L.T. In other words, you think it's taking a healthy direction to foster a local music in Palestine? I can't help thinking—
> L.B.:…Look. Neither I nor Beethoven nor God nor Irgun can create a nationalist music in Palestine. Nor can the composers themselves. Either it will grow, or it won't. *It will grow as the national community grows, as the integration of their society progresses. Otherwise it won't…* [author's emphasis]
> L.T.: Haven't I heard of a new movement in Palestinian music? I think they call it the "Mediterranean style"…that certainly sounds to me like a conscious movement, apart from the social integration of the community. If you go to help music there, you must inevitably help this school. No?
> L.B.: No. One cannot help a school. Especially this one, where Palestinian composers, mostly German-bred or influenced, are consciously using Arabic thematic material. What you really have is Max Reger trying to write cooch dances.[4]

Not coincidentally, these ideas resonate directly with Bernstein's larger musical philosophy, as discussed in the previous chapter. Consider these words from Bernstein's Harvard thesis concerning the early stages of American nationalist musical development:

> It was simply a case of artificial respiration; the new indigenous materials were merely imposed upon an otherwise neutral kind of music scheme, in order to give that scheme a new life and meaning. But unfortunately, it usually worked the other way. The "American" material, instead, lost its own luster and appeal, unhappily surrounded as it was by much Brahmsian or Wagnerian matter. The whole work was then an anomaly, partly one thing and partly the other, with both parts suffering in the juxtaposition. There was Negro material, but no Negro style. Perhaps the composers were to blame—being in a sense, pioneers, and not satisfactorily equipped; but this is too severe an interpretation. Most of these musicians had been extensively trained, usually in Germany.[5]

Fascinatingly, the rest of Bernstein's dialogue with the stranger, in which he attempts to defend his own interest in the development of Israeli musical nationalism, takes a detour into his view of its parallel: namely, in the similarly "artificial" nation of America. As in his thesis, Bernstein lays out his vision of how these early attempts might eventually segue into an intermediate period—just as it had, in Bernstein's mind, with

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[4] Bernstein, "Dialogue and…," 116. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[5] Leonard Bernstein, "The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music…" in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 45. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Gershwin in America. This would then perhaps be followed by an "osmotic process," as had been seen in the music of America's own Walter Piston; incidentally, Bernstein defensively refers to him as "the top internationalist!" Eventually, perhaps the musical integration would reach a level of sophistication that was, to Bernstein, best exhibited by the masterful works of Aaron Copland. Bernstein draws from the same names, list of examples and ideas, and in much the same order. He likewise exclaims to his bewildered cabin mate—who still cannot reconcile the young musician's imagined reconciliation of political internationalism and nationalist music—that "one day there will be a Palestinian music…They have the same problems of conscious nationalism, and will flounder and experiment until society is sufficiently integrated to allow the osmosis I referred to before. It's wonderfully exciting to watch happen."[6]

If one is familiar with Bernstein's thesis and other early writings discussed in the last chapter, it is easy to share the idealistic if not naïve excitement of a man not yet thirty who envisions himself coming in on the "ground floor" of a process he had spent the last decade charting and pondering in his own native land, even attempting to realize in his own compositions. As he tells Trirème: "The Scherzo of my Jeremiah Symphony, for example, is certainly not jazz; and yet I'm convinced I could never have written it if I had not had a real background in jazz," to which the Frenchman replies: "What has all this got to do with Palestine?"[7]

For Bernstein, "all this" had a great deal to do with Palestine. As an enthusiastic "expert" in the process by which a nationalist state produces a nationalist music by way of an international assimilation, perhaps it was he who would be best equipped to steer

[6] Bernstein, "Dialogue and…," 118-119. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[7] Ibid., 119. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

the infancy of the process in the "right" direction. While Bernstein's Zionism—however lower-case he imagined the "z"—might initially be surmised to be at odds with his political values, I would argue that this is far less true than has been previously imagined. To be sure, in aligning himself with such an endeavor with vocal and eager tenacity, Bernstein put himself on a dichotomous trajectory, politically and ethically. Musically speaking, however, these factors were indeed readily reconcilable. That Bernstein chartered this course through the vantage point of an American Jew in the wake of the most horrifying event in the common era of Jewish history, armed with little worldly experience and much youthful naïveté, cannot be understated for its importance. Seen through the dreamy lens of his own impressive sense of loyalty and loving devotion to "his" people—be they Jews or otherwise[8]—one can see why the liberally-minded Bernstein could so easily surrender to the cause of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, despite his embrace of internationalist political ideals. As noted in the previous chapter, music had sustained his own father through the crisis of his homeland peril under czarist rule; the concert experience had brought Sam and Leonard closer together as father and son, even as the concept of music as a viable occupation drove them apart. Music had introduced Bernstein to the majority of a growing circle of people who mattered most to him. Putting aside the gruesome reality of the discord created by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that he had overlooked in his youthful fervor, for Bernstein, the act of making and experiencing music was nonetheless a force of healing and togetherness.

Benbassa and Attias may have explained the "American factor" of Bernstein's endeavors in Israel best in a general sense through a reverse supposition of the reasons

[8] Throughout his life, Bernstein was intensely loyal to those he cared about. By the time he died, he was still in touch with many of the same people with whom he associated at this early point, even insofar as the roster included early schoolmates and female friends whom he had dated only casually.

why the modern Israeli is so often driven by compulsion to take leave from home and discover the land of his or her ancestors:

> Even those Jews who were born in Israel, the natives, the *sabras*, go back, if only for the space of a voyage or pilgrimage, to the land in which their parents or ancestors lived. They feel an irresistible compulsion to rediscover the elsewhere that will allow them to find themselves and seize hold of their very Israeliness…It may be that, without the other, the Jews feels irrevocably alone: he is separated from himself as much as he is separated from a neighbor at once very similar and very different, who, when he is present, compels the Jew to be himself.[9]

Despite flirting with the idea of taking up residence in Palestine, Bernstein would always remain firmly and foremost an American. Perhaps, like the modern Israeli who is driven to the exiled lands of his ancestors in search of his very Israeliness—only definable in relation to the other—Bernstein too was driven across the sea not only in search of his Jewish roots, but also in search of everything that being an assimilated American meant to his sense of moral responsibility: his duty to both his own people and the other, as well as to his own maturing sense of identity. It is from this vantage point that the events that follow in his life are explored.

* * *

On 28 May 1946, at a dinner hosted by the American Fund for Palestinian Institutions at the Waldorf Astoria, Leonard Bernstein at last made a strong public statement to match his inner stirrings over Palestine to an audience of Jewish elites. Though he conceded that he "[came to them] only from the restricted little world of music," he seems to have made little secret of his support for the Zionist cause.[10]

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[9] Benbassa and Attias, 8-9.

[10] Leonard Bernstein, "Speech: American Fund for Palestinians," 28 May 1946, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 71, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. Bernstein wrote the following memo across the top of the transcript: "This is very inaccurate." Upon examination, there are a number of possible errors concerning word choices, yet the overall sentiment of the document appears to be in line with Bernstein's views at that time.

Palestine's station in the world community, Bernstein argued, was "a matter of the greatest importance." The notion of defining the Jew, Bernstein argued, was of little consequence; what mattered most was that they were a people without a home who must be given a chance to grow. The chief means to achieving this end was to support their primary cultural organization, the Palestine Symphony Orchestra until such time when they, like the Jewish people, could become self-sustainable and able to flourish independent of foreign support. He went on to announce to his audience that, like Arturo Toscanini and Bronislaw Huberman before him, he looked forward to lending his services as a guest conductor to the ensemble in the upcoming 1947 spring season.[11]

Indeed, those at the head of the orchestra—at this early date still being run by administrators under the services of guest conductors—were equally eager for the possibility of such an engagement. S.B. Lewertoff, a chief official for the organization, reached out to Bernstein in November 1945 to gauge his interest in forming a relationship with the Palestine Symphony. "Mr. Bernstein is, of course, very interested in your orchestra," replied Helen Coates, "and he is engaged in plans to be of help to your organization."[12] As it turned out, Bernstein was already lobbying on behalf of the orchestra in the year prior to the aforementioned event. Coates alerted Lewertoff that on 13 December, Bernstein was to perform before a group, arranged for Sidney Matz of the Society for the Advancement of Music in Palestine, in order to stimulate interest in the orchestra and its financial standing.[13] However, Bernstein was not yet ready to commit to

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[11] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[12] Helen Coates to S.B. Lewertoff, 27 November 1945, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[13] Ibid.; "Plans to Extend $10,000 for Religious Folk Music Research in Palestine," 12 November 1930, <http://www.jta.org/1930/11/12/archive/plan-to-expend-10000-for-religious-folk-music-research-in-palestine>, accessed 4 July 2014.

anything definite. He was, however, interested in receiving further details about a possible invitation, and Coates indicated that he had expressed keen interest in their prospectus for the orchestra's current season.

Bernstein was likely quite excited by the possibility of forming a relationship with the orchestra. The primary obstacle, at this point, was merely a financial one. The orchestra was not in a position even to cover the whole of his travel expenses, and hoped Bernstein would be willing to donate his time, as Lewertoff explained in his next letter:

> I was so happy to receive telegraphic notification…that you are seriously considering accepting our invitation to come to Palestine and conduct our Orchestra and, further, that you spoke at a function for the Orchestra given in New York recently. I need not tell you how delighted we all are to know of your interest in our organization and how we look forward to welcoming you here…I feel I should stress the fact that the Orchestra fights a very hard struggle to keep existing and in view of our special position most of our famous conductors—I need only mention the names of Toscanini, the late Felix von Weingartner, Molinari, Dr. Sargent—gave their services to the Orchestra on the occasion of their first visits. We, for our part, bore the expenses of their journeys from Europe here and of their stay in Palestine and Egypt (we make regular concert tours to Egypt). Unfortunately with all good will the situation of the Palestine Orchestra is such that we are precluded from undertaking too heavy financial responsibilities.[14]

Bernstein, who was known throughout his career for being generous with his time, was not to be impeded by financial concerns, and he and Coates were already in the early stages of devising a feasible solution:

> Unless he has a concert tour in Europe arranged, it would not be possible, financially, for him to go to Palestine. Mr. [Bernstein] would be more than glad to waive any fee for conducting your concerts, provided his expenses to and from Europe were met, as you suggested they would be. Mr. [Bernstein] wishes it were possible for him to pay all his expenses from New York to Palestine, as he would greatly enjoy the privilege of conducting your orchestra but, unfortunately, this is not possible, since he is a young man, at the beginning of his career.[15]

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[14] S.B. Lewertoff to Leonard Bernstein 7 January 1946, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[15] Notes on a letter to S.B. Lewertoff by Helen Coates, Ibid.

Bernstein would make his way to continental Europe in April 1947, from whence he would continue onward to Palestine; afterwards, he would undertake a wide-scale concert tour of Europe, initially set to include France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Austria.[16] With the knowledge that Bernstein wished to travel to Israel during the period of Passover in 1947,[17] a preliminary schedule to include eight concerts in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Rehovot, and Haifa was set forth on 1 September 1946 alongside an acceptance of Bernstein's proposed program of Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 2, Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto, and Bernstein's own Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah*.[18] The general secretary (unnamed) concluded the letter with the following assurance, an ominous reminder of the political turmoil by which Bernstein would soon be greeted firsthand:

> In conclusion, we want to assure you, dear Mr. Bernstein, that you will be quite safe with us here whenever you may come over to us. As a matter of fact, we scarcely ever had a quiet time in Palestine and nevertheless our artistic activities have never been interrupted by any political disturbances. If you realize that Arturo Toscanini toured our country twice between 1936-1939 at a period when riots in Palestine were on the peak and violence prevailed throughout the country—and if you will learn that conductors such as Bernardino Molinari and Charles Munch have irrevocably accepted to conduct next season we hope that you will show no further reluctance to accept our proposals. We also wish to point out that local events are usually given exaggeration publicly outside the country and we reiterate that no riots or political disturbances have or will ever be able to hamper us in our artistic work.[19]

While the claim of media sensationalism of events in Palestine was no doubt grounded, the orchestra's assurance that its "artistic activities [had] never been interrupted by any political disturbances" would soon to be put to the test. Never one to shy away from

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[16] Burton,164-165.
[17] Musicians Union of the Palestine Orchestra to Leonard Bernstein c/o Arthur Judson, 1 July 1946, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1.
[18] Palestine Symphony Orchestra General Secretary to Leonard Bernstein, 1 September 1946, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1.
[19] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

breaking new ground, Bernstein would prove once again that where he was concerned, there was a first time for everything.

On 9 April 1947, alongside his father and sister Shirley, Bernstein set sail on the SS *America* from New York to Cherbourg, France.[20] The three travelled by car to Paris and had a rather unglamorous first dinner on European soil consisting of canned foods in their hotel room. The only means of travel to Palestine was through Cairo, and it was in their attempt to obtain passage to Egypt that the family first encountered problems. Bernstein's zealous support of Zionist causes had made him a target for scorn, and the Egyptian embassy in Paris had been expressly instructed not to grant the Bernstein family their visas. Ultimately, as Shirley Bernstein recounted, an official at the American embassy who was "a fan of Lenny's" intervened with the Egyptian authorities, and the visas came through at the last moment "like magic."[21] Things only became more problematic once the trio reached Egypt, where they were at first instructed that their abundant luggage could not be accommodated in total. According to Shirley:

> The atmosphere was tense and hostile…We were about to count ourselves lucky to lose our baggage and get *ourselves* out of Egypt when the Customs inspector's position shifted. He finally ruled that the matter could be arranged for a $300 payment for "overweight baggage," in addition to the "gift" of Lenny's fountain pen, which the inspector had been eyeing throughout the negotiations.[22]

Bernstein, however, seemed to take the events in stride. On 18 April, he cabled to Helen Coates: "SAFE IN PARIS VISA PROBLEMS STAGGERING ANYTHING MAY HAPPEN WHAT FUN LOVE LENNY."[23] Knowing his sense of adventure and love of

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[20] Burton, 161.
[21] Shirley Bernstein, *Making Music: Leonard Bernstein* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Press, 1963), 107.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates 18 April 1947, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 13. Used by Permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. All telegrams presented as printed.

the unpredictable, it is difficult to know whether he was being at all facetious in his assessment of the circumstances.

The Bernsteins arrived in Tel Aviv on 23 April 1947. The political situation was tense as cries for an independent state by way of the Balfour Declaration reached fever pitch. Only twenty-one days prior, Britain had essentially washed its hands of its most problematic colony, referring the issue of Palestine's future to the United Nations; they in turn would elect to appoint a Special Committee to delve further into the matter on 13 May.[24] Bernstein, not surprisingly, grasped the significance of the hour, as reflected in a letter penned to Koussevitzky on 25 April:

> If you ever wanted to be involved in a historical moment, this is it. The people are remarkable; life goes on in spite of bombs, police, everything. There is a strength and devotion in these people that is formidable. They will never let their land be taken from them; they will die first. And the country is beautiful beyond description. It is a real tropical vacation for me, with the wonderful Mediterranean and the sweet, warm Spring…Please don't be worried about me; the bombs fly, but the newspapers exaggerate.[25]

Other letters reflect Bernstein's excited energy at being present for the making of history. Young, impetuous, and somewhat naïve in the ways of the world—in spite of the lurking presence of violence and danger—he seemed to be carried away in the spectacle of events, and understandably so. Only a matter of days prior, he had never set foot upon continental Europe; now, he was in a virtual warzone. Perhaps only when Bernstein left Palestine would he be able to soak in the depth of his experience. For now, the circumstances catered to his flair for the dramatic. Soon after his arrival, he wrote to Helen Coates:

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[24] United Nations General Assembly, "Special Committee on Palestine: Report of the First Committee," 13 May 1947, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/06F1E89B3B48291B802564B40049CC67>, accessed 1 August 2014.

[25] Leonard Bernstein to Serge Koussevitzky, 25 April 1947, as quote in Simeone, ed., 224-225. Used by Permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

> Palestine opened on us like a fresh sky after the storm. We were met, taken care of, calmed. Daddy is in Paradise—he loves every minute…The situation is tense and unpredictable, the orchestra fine and screaming with enthusiasm (first rehearsal this morning). I gave one downbeat today to the accompaniment of a shattering explosion outside the hall. We calmly resumed our work. That's the method here. An Englishman was kidnapped from our hotel last night, the police station was blown up today, a truck demolished in the square—and life goes on; we dance, play boogie-woogie, walk by the Mediterranean, (which is out of a fairy book) and we hope for the best.[26]

To *New York Post* music critic Leonard Lyons, his succinct description of circumstances in Palestine communicates the unreality of a land in which the order of life for hardened citizens persists amidst chaos: "But the café sitters don't put down their newspapers, the children continue to jump rope. The Arab goatherd in the square adjusts another milking bag, and I give the next downbeat. The orchestra's fine. Shalom."[27]

Indeed, both the orchestra and the public were elevated by Bernstein's presence. The first Sunday subscription concert in Tel Aviv on April 27—televised on PBS Palestine—received, according to the *Palestine Post*, "an ovation unequalled here for many years."[28] For the inaugural night of his tour, Bernstein, conducting from the piano, went forward with the Ravel Piano Concerto and Schumann's Symphony No. 2, but opted for Mozart's Symphony No. 36 in place of his own first symphony. He would repeat the same repertoire on April 29 and 30. On the final day of this program, the *Palestine Post* lauded Bernstein as a "sensation." The reviewer noted that "Bernstein [had] presented something of a tour de force in appearing as both soloist and conductor in Ravel's Piano Concerto." Bernstein's abilities, by the critic's estimation, had likewise

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[26] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 25 April 1947, as quoted in Burton, 162. Used by Permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[27] Burton, 162.
[28] "Tel Aviv Welcomes Conductor-Pianist," *Palestine Post*, 28 April 1947, 3; "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 30 April 1947, 4. Subscription concerts regularly occur on Sundays in Israel in accordance with *Shabbat*.

rehabilitated a lackluster composition in impressive fashion: "The greatest experience of the evening was the unparalleled life injected into the performance of Schumann's Second Symphony. That Bernstein infused supreme qualities into a comparatively weak work was proof alone of his gifts."[29] Peter Gradenwitz, future Bernstein biographer and a prominent critic in the Palestine music scene, hailed the event a triumph, calling Bernstein "one of the most talked-of personalities and popular visitors in years." Describing the public's fervor for the vibrant and handsome conductor, he noted that "[the] enthusiasm of the audience at his first concert…knew no bounds, and not since the days of Arturo Toscanini—who, as you will remember, launched our orchestra on its way ten years ago—has a conductor been recalled so many times and given a similar ovation." According to Gradenwitz, the orchestra's "seventy-five musicians were fascinated by Mr. Bernstein," their enthusiasm marked in spite of their previous brushes with the likes of Molinari, Toscanini, Munch, and others.[30] This time, of course, their imminent guest also brought with him a rare ability that must have further endeared the musicians: he was able to rehearse the ensemble in their native Hebrew.

The following day, Bernstein would be in Jerusalem. Only this hallowed ground—the city in which the very events brought to life by his first symphony took place—would be suitable for the international premiere of his *Jeremiah*. But in fact, there was a far more pragmatic reason for this decision than appearances indicate: the score of the work had been lost in transit between Rome and Jerusalem. The replacement was secured by way of TWA's "Bombay Merchant" from New York to Lydda (present-day

[29] "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 30 April 1947, 4.
[30] Peter Gradenwitz, "Palestine Visitor: Bernstein Helps Celebrate Orchestra's Anniversary," *New York Times*, 18 May 1947, 87.

Ben Gurion International Airport), after a journey of approximately twenty-five hours.[31] Although the circumstances of who funded this arrangement are unknown, the message is decidedly clear: Bernstein was not about to let this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity pass him by.

The day after the 1 May Jerusalem concert, the *New York Times* was already carrying the story of these momentous musical events. Clifton Daniel conveyed the intense emotional energy brimming over from the spectacle. He describes Bernstein as "a young man in a tweed jacket and sports trousers, looking no older than a college boy and handsome enough to be a bobby-soxers hero" who had just "[received] an acclamation as an orchestral conductor in Palestine second only to that of the great an venerable Arturo Toscanini." For his own part, Bernstein was overcome. "I was in tears," he told Daniel. "I never have seen anything like it—that hysterical, screaming audience." His audience had been equally moved, "sentimentally captivated by his combined qualities of being young, handsome, talented, and Jewish."[32] In truth, the report attested even more to just how greatly American audiences were beginning to warm to these same traits. About this new vivacious force on the conducting scene, the public could not read enough; every movement in his career was quickly becoming news.

Perhaps even more significantly, Daniel had closed with a summation of Bernstein's recent remarks to the *Palestine Post* concerning the future viability of the orchestra, bringing his plea straight to the American populace. Bernstein's statements were provocative—perhaps even to the point of angering his hosts—but his intentions were honorable. In retrospect, the column reads as a direct appeal to the world, especially

[31] "Another Jeremiah," *Palestine Post*, 29 April 1947, 3.
[32] Clifton Daniel, "Bernstein Scores in Palestine Bow," *New York Times*, 2 May 1947, 28.

America, to embrace the orchestra. This piece, at least insofar as it includes Bernstein's own remarks, is worth examining at length, as it provides both an early indication of the nature of the deep relationship Bernstein was to share with the orchestra and a succinct assessment of the state of the organization at this early juncture; it is also a manifesto indicative of specifics of the course which Bernstein would take with the orchestra.

> "The Palestine Philharmonic has the highest potential of any orchestra I've ever conducted, and I have no doubt that it could easily be the best orchestra in the world," said Leonard Bernstein, who has conducted the best orchestras in the United States, at a press conference in Jerusalem yesterday…"The [orchestra] has enormous intelligence, enormous devotion, and great musicality…But it needs a few things. It needs the physical and mental conditions to enable it to grow."
>
> One of its main drawbacks, he said, was that it had no permanent conductor of its own. In the United States good orchestras had degenerated when a procession of conductors had led them in turn. The P.P.O. had never been under any stable regime, and had never had a chance to adopt one. It must get a conductor soon, he stressed.
>
> Its second need was for a good hall of its own, with good acoustics and large enough so that the musicians would not be exhausted by having to give the same concerts, over and over again, as often as it must today.
>
> "The Orchestra cannot play with the same spontaneity and freshness the seventh time it plays a programme as the first," Mr. Bernstein said. "It has been heroic. I heard the last Munch concert—the seventh time the Orchestra played the same programme—and it was full of inspiration and fire. But it is scandalous that it has to do this.
>
> "It would be most important and wonderful if the Orchestra could tour the United States. It could represent the top of Palestine feeling and accomplishment. I'd consider it an honour to conduct them in America, and I hope that if and when it comes I'll be the guy that does it."[33]

In closing, Bernstein powerfully reiterated his deep connection to the people of Palestine and boasted of their innate musicality: "Even with my back to them, I could feel them every second. They went up with the crescendi and down with the diminuendi—they were barometric—it was the subtlest thing in the world."[34]

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[33] "'Highest Potential of Any Orchestra'," *Palestine Post*, 2 May 1947, 3. Bernstein would go on to conduct the orchestra in the United States, as will be explained at length in Chapter Three.
[34] Ibid.

Bernstein would repeat the Jerusalem program three times in Tel Aviv (4-6 May), twice in Haifa (7-8 May), and once in Ein Harod on 10 May. Although this brought the total number of concerts beyond his initial commitment of eight dates, he nonetheless took part in another more ground-breaking musical event with an entirely new program. Seeking to push the limits of variety slightly beyond the current comfort zone of standard repertoire, Bernstein organized a concert in coordination with the Tel Aviv International Society for Contemporary Music, the Tel Aviv Chamber Choir, the Palestine String Quartet, and a small ensemble gathered from the performing forces of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra. The concert opened with the works of two Jewish composers in Palestine: Seter Mordechai's *Choral Suite* and Odeon Partos's *Concerto for String Quartet*. The second half of the program was comprised of Bernstein's own Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, a piano arrangement of Copland's *El Sálon México* (a work that had played a prominent role in Bernstein's Harvard thesis), and Milhaud's *La création du monde*, steeped in the musical language of American jazz.[35] The program, which one reviewer noted provided Bernstein a springboard "for a short and illuminating address on nationalism in music,"[36] was likely undertaken with the aim of drawing parallels between America's own development of a nationalist music—as described in his Harvard thesis years earlier—and his vision for the course of a national music in Palestine.

Bernstein's account of his conversation with the French cabin mate during his departing journey suggests that these concerns were in the forefront of his mind throughout this first sojourn in Palestine. This concert venture on the part of the composer further bolsters the argument outlined in the introduction to the chapter:

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[35] Milhaud finished composing *La création du monde* in 1923, the year after a tour of the United States, during which he experienced his first authentic jazz performance in Harlem.
[36] "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 7 May 1947, 4.

namely, that Bernstein imagined his mission as far more than that of a conductor lending his support to Zionist causes. More significantly, he perhaps saw himself as a seasoned musical adviser, who with his own first-hand education in Judaism and possession of an impressive grasp of American repertoire, found himself in the unique position to shape subtly the musical destiny of the Jewish people. Of course, in the end, the organic process he had codified in his thesis would have to take hold. However, with a people as musically informed as the Jews of Palestine—with such a tendency toward the embrace of international assimilation—Bernstein reckoned that it would only be a matter of time before the music of this international blend of Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews melded seamlessly with the language of Palestine's Arab population into a cohesive musical vocabulary. In the interim, however, he could help guide the process along the correct channels.

Yet there were some among the higher ranks of the orchestra's supporters who evidently did not take Bernstein's remarks to the *Post* in their intended spirit. Writing to orchestra chairman Felix Rosenbluth during the final days of his stay, he sought to clarify them, reaffirming that the orchestra had "the possibility of attaining to the first ranks of the orchestras of the world. Its potential is enormous, largely because of the innate musicality and intelligence of its personnel. Moreover, the diversity of its musical backgrounds makes for versatility."[37] Nonetheless, he reiterated that this outcome was conditional upon certain requirements being met. "No orchestra can fully succeed which

[37] Leonard Bernstein to Felix Rosenbluth 9 May 1947, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. Used by Permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

must play in one week twice as many concerts as rehearsals. The proportion must be quite reversed."[38] Bernstein went on to list the requirements as he saw them:

> There must be a hall which is acoustically satisfactory, not only to insure the accurate reception of the music by the audience, but also to permit the performers to hear clearly what they are doing. (I have played here in halls where it was next to impossible to determine what was happening in the bass section).
>
> There must be a permanent conductor. This is of prime importance in the ultimate moulding of a unified organization. It is natural that at this stage the orchestra would be mainly a collection of individual temperaments: but now there must be a single line - a single force to unite these individualities into one concentrated, flexible voice.
>
> The orchestra must be better balanced. At present the string section is undersized, and must force its tone to be heard with the whole ensemble.
>
> There must be a pension fund of good size, to permit the natural influx of young musicians to supplement the retirement of the older ones.
>
> There must be an adequate library, in order that the orchestra may have immediate access to whatever music-material they may need. This would avoid the uncertainty of being constantly dependent on the importation of music from abroad.[39]

Bernstein's clarification was even more candid than his comments to the *Palestine Post*. Yet this list of requirements would prove prudent, and Bernstein would go a long way in personally seeing to their implementation in the coming years.

The Bernstein family greatly enjoyed their time as tourists in the Holy Land; Sam in particular was deeply gratified by the experience. The trio visited the Dead Sea and the shores of the Mediterranean; they danced a *horah* with settlers of the Erek Valley.[40] Additionally, while there is no reliable account of all of their activities, one assumes they took in some of the holy sights in Jerusalem as conditions allowed, such as the Western Wall. While the cities were under a strict eight o'clock curfew established under threat of

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[38] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[39] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philhamonic Archives. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[40] Arthur D. Holzman, "Palestine Inspires New Ballet by Young Composer," *Boston Daily Globe*, 2 June 1947, 10. The *horah* is a traditional communal dance native to the Balkans that also took on significance as a common dance on the *kibbutzim* of Israel, celebratory in nature and typically accompanied by fast-paced Jewish folk music.

violent outbursts, the mandate was lifted in order to accommodate Bernstein's concert schedule.[41] "Audiences jammed into the overflowing halls, and they reacted to the music with an excitement I've never seen equaled in any other country," Shirley would recall.[42] Like the critics and Bernstein himself, Shirley was deeply moved by the vigor and sensitivity of the audience in their reaction to her brother:

> All the audiences were extraordinary, listening to the music with pinpoint concentration, and at the end applauding and shouting with an electrifying intensity that grew even more fervent with each concert, as if they were trying to communicate to the conductor their approval of him and their joy in the music he was making for them. They communicated all right. For Lenny, the whole experience in Palestine with the orchestra, the audiences, and the people he met was one of the most moving times of his life.[43]

Bernstein's last concert appearance in Israel took place at Ein Harod, a *kibbutz* in the northern valley region near Mount Gilboa.[44] The nighttime amphitheater concert created quite a sensation in this rural region, drawing a whopping 3,500 spectators. As Arthur Holzman of the *Boston Globe* reported: "They had come by truck or wagon and on foot, they lay atop cars, stood in the aisles. And spilled over the platform. Because of government road restrictions, many of them would have to spend the rest of the night until dawn lying in trucks or in the open fields."[45] Now, Bernstein's stature was being elevated to Messiah-like proportions: "It was as if Heaven had sent them this genius to help them forget their troubles."[46] Shirley had described the event in an equally dramatic fashion. Apparently, there had been at least one disturbing hindrance upon this striking occasion:

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[41] Shirley Bernstein, 108.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 109.
[44] The *kibbutz* is an agriculturally-based collective in Israel, appearing in Palestine starting in the beginning of the twentieth century.
[45] "Palestine Inspires New Ballet by Young Composer," 10.
[46] Ibid.

> [The] electric lights suddenly went off. We were told the power failure was likely due to Arab sabotage. This kibbutz adjoined the Jordanian border and had been victims of such sabotage before. The amphitheater was packed with people who had come from as far as 50 miles away…on horseback, on burro, and on foot, feeling their way in the darkness, slipping under barbed wire—all to hear a concert. In the face of their effort, power failure or not, the concert could not be called off. The audience sat quietly in the dark for two hours waiting for the auxiliary generator of the kibbutz to build up enough power to provide the necessary lights. At ten-thirty the lights finally came on again, and Lenny began the concert.[47]

Bernstein likewise basked in the adoration of his audiences: he amusingly wrote to his brother Burton: "The concerts are a fantastic success. I've become The Sinatra of Palestine."[48]

As Bernstein prepared to depart from Palestine, his heart was heavy. "I shall hate to leave Palestine," he told Holzman of the *Boston Globe*. "I would like nothing more than to stay here, not for days or months, but for years."[49] There was even more grandiose talk of building a family home on the cliffs of Herzliah overlooking the Mediterranean in which his family could vacation, just as Sam and Jennie had done in Sharon.[50] Bernstein likewise made known to the correspondent his desire to bring to Israel a "new ballet" called *The Dybbuk*, which his experiences there had helped inspire.[51] The ballet would not premiere until 1974, though Bernstein would attempt to rush its completion in time to commemorate Israel's twenty-fifth anniversary of statehood in 1973.

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[47] Shirley Bernstein, 109.
[48] Leonard Bernstein to Burton Bernstein, n.d., Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 5, Folder 31. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. The letter can be reliably dated to the 1947 trip due to his evocation of the title "Palestine" to describe the land of Israel, as well as his sign off of "L and S," which refers to himself and his sister Shirley.
[49] "Palestine Inspires New Ballet by Young Composer," 10.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid. This is one of the earliest documented references to Bernstein's conceptualization of *Dybbuk*, a tale based on Jewish folklore.

Bernstein's Judaism remained at the forefront of his mind as he undertook his first wide-scale conducting venture in Europe subsequent to his departure from Palestine. In fact, it may have played into his decision to cancel his planned conducting engagement in Vienna, a city then enveloped in a sordid history of anti-Semitism. In the first decade of the century and in spite of his conversion to Catholicism, they had driven their own Jewish-born Gustav Mahler to seek refuge and a new career in New York. His music had subsequently been banned, and while it would be Bernstein who would reintroduce the Viennese to the genius of their own composer, at this stage their requirements were far too conventional for Bernstein's taste. "They wanted Bach, Mozart, and Schumann, which is silly," he wrote to Coates from his new station in Prague. "And then my reports were that the orchestra was still 60% Nazi and the whole town follows suit—which you can imagine sounded uninviting in Palestine where I was so much 'chez moi.'"[52]

His nonchalant attitude toward skipping the Vienna concert—coupled with a letter to Aaron Copland following the Prague premiere of his Symphony No. 3—suggests that his heightened acclaim in Palestine had, as Humphrey Burton has observed, "gone to his head."[53] Bernstein, it seems, was beginning to regard himself as the formidable new force on the conducting scene that had so impressed the media in his own country, as well as that of the audiences of Palestine. "First, I must say it's a wonderful work," he observed to his once-composition mentor of the latter's Third Symphony. "Coming to know it so much better I found in it new lights and shades—and new faults. Sweetie, the end is a sin. You've got to change. Stop the presses! We must talk—about the whole last movement

[52] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 20 May 1947, as quoted in Burton, 165. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[53] Burton, 165.

in fact."[54] Copland, for his own part, was friendly but nonplussed in response to his friend's criticism. "It was fun to read the various reactions to the Symph - including your own," he replied.[55] "I've decided that it's a tough job to write an almost 40 min. piece which is perfect throughout. That's about all I'll concede."[56]

Indeed, Bernstein had reached a pivotal point in his new career. As Koussevitzky prepared for his own retirement, he hoped that his exuberant protégé would be granted the reins of the Boston Symphony. With Bernstein riding high on the successes of his Palestine trip and considering Koussevitzky's influence in the community, he hardly seemed an unlikely choice for the board. Perhaps it was this continued hope, coupled with his newly found interest in the European conducting scene, that compelled Bernstein to respond decisively to his next contact from the Palestine Symphony, which offered him the directorship of the orchestra. Bernstein admitted that in having to refuse the offer "for this year"—still leaving open the possibility of a future arrangement—he was "sorrier than [the orchestra administration] are."[57] His explanation was one of pragmatism, citing his prior commitments to Koussevitzky in Boston: "It seems eminently unfair to you, as well as to the Palestinian public, to take responsibility for the organizing of a music season of which I can really control only the final weeks. There is no possibility of my being in Palestine before February." Although he feared that even if the season could be reorganized to begin in February his planning of the details by proxy

[54] Leonard Bernstein to Aaron Copland, 27 May 1947, as quoted in Simeone, ed., 225. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[55] Ibid., 226.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Leonard Bernstein to Zwi Schreiber, 8 July 1947, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

might prove a "a clumsy and difficult arrangement," he admitted that he did wish to have a stake in the future of the orchestra, and thus suggested a compromise:

> My deep attachment to Eretz-Israel and to the orchestra inspire me to keep as close a connection as is possible under the circumstances; and I would, therefore, accept with pleasure the title and the role of "musical advisor." This would enable me to make suggestions by mail, and other means of "remote control." I would be glad to contribute my criticism to your seasonal planning, with a view to the possibility of a more integrated and longer association in the succeeding years.
>
> Please understand that my refusal is the result only of the existence of previous commitments, and that, had it been mechanically possible, I should have accepted with gusto.

At the close of the same letter, Bernstein did have one emphatic request of his own to make in the postscript:

> I should like to offer the information that Dr. Koussevitzky is most eager to conduct in Palestine. This would be of the greatest importance and value to the orchestra…it would also be of great importance to him as a means of reestablishing himself with his people. He feels this very deeply. I think this should be your first consideration for next season from every point of view. I think it unwise to allow the fact of his adolescent conversion to stand in the way for he is in every other respect as completely Jewish as I am. Please give this your most serious thought.[58]

In both matters, Bernstein was eventually to have his suggestions granted: the orchestra would appoint him as their musical advisor, and in 1950, Koussevitzky would travel to Israel to be the orchestra's next in a growing list of distinguished guest conductors. Initially, however, the reply from Rosenbluth was at best lukewarm, and is revealing of the complex political climate surrounding the world's premier "Jewish orchestra," as Bernstein referred to them:

> You know, of course, that the matter is an extremely delicate one…It goes without saying that from a purely artistic point of view it would be of the greatest importance to have Koussevitzky conduct the Orchestra, but it is difficult to say how the doubts arising from his having left the fold can be easily brushed aside. We appreciate, of course, that from Kousevitsky's point of view, his willingness

[58] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

> to come to Palestine and conduct the orchestra constitutes in itself an admission of return to his people, but we are afraid this is not enough. It might be different if Koussevitzky would see his way, prior to coming out to Palestine, to make a public announcement in America, whereby he would identify himself with the Jewish people. But even then it would remain to see how public opinion in Palestine would react.[59]

To Bernstein's suggestion of an alternate title, Rosenbluth let it be known that the matter would be discussed on Bernstein's next trip to Israel, already slated for the following February.[60]

In the meantime, Bernstein continued to assist the Jewish cause in Palestine from afar. Now entering his third season as the music director of the New York City Symphony, he utilized his position to voice his support. In his opening concert on 22 September 1947, the highlight of the program was Mahler's Symphony No. 2, *Resurrection*, preceded by the little-known *Symphonia Amamith* by Munio Mahler-Kalkstein—the General Secretary of the Palestine Symphony who was himself related to Mahler[61]—which drew upon the Palestinian folk resources Bernstein so believed could contribute to a national musical language there, provided advances in societal integration could be made in the future. The concert, which Bernstein declared was undertaken in honor of "the resurrection of Palestine," proved a bold proposition in every respect.[62] At this early juncture, the now-revered *Resurrection* had likely seen few more performances than its predecessor on the program. Humphrey Burton has noted "[the] depth of the

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[59] Felix Rosenbluth to Leonard Bernstein, 6 August 1947, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Mahler-Kalkstein has been referred to in press and other bibliographic sources by the names Mendel, Manuel, Muni, and Munio; he is additionally known as a writer and composer in Israel as Menachem Avidom. For the purposes of citing his correspondence with Bernstein, he will be henceforth referred to as "Munio Mahler-Kalkstein," as this is how he signed his personal letters to Bernstein and how he was addressed by the conductor.
[62] Howard Taubman, "Bernstein Opens Concert Season," *New York Times*, 23 September 1947, 30.

prejudice against Mahler which Bernstein fought—joining a crusade on behalf of Mahler that he was later to lead in triumph."[63]

His contemporaries, however, failed to grasp the significance of the relationship between Bernstein and Mahler's music at this juncture. Irving Kolodin of the *New York Sun* fingered the symphony as "[the] most bumptious, empty noise ever contrived."[64] Howard Taubman of the *New York Times*, whose publication had recently lauded Bernstein's efforts in Palestine, was slightly more restrained but nonetheless expressed trepidation:

> It will serve no purpose at this date to argue the case of Mahler. Those who find Mahler a stirring experience have to the right to keep finding him so: those of us who wish he had either an editor or more self criticism have the right not to listen to him. The pity of it is that the choice has to be one or the other. There are pages of poetry and grandeur and a shy, sensitive wit to the symphony. But oh, the length of it![65]

To the critics thinking, it appeared Bernstein was losing touch with the American concert audience. Virgil Thomson actually implied that Bernstein was losing touch with his audience, going so far as to say that he "seems to have turned, in the last two years, more firmly away from objective music making, and to have embraced a career of sheer vainglory."[66]

The underlying message that perhaps Bernstein's prominence as a representative to the Jewish cause was now a detriment, at least in the eyes of his critics, must have come as a personal blow to the composer. Already on 23 August, Bernstein had written composer David Diamond that he planned on "canceling [his] whole European trip, with

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[63] Burton, 168.
[64] Ibid.
[65] "Bernstein Opens Concert Season," 30.
[66] William Westbrook Burton, ed., *Conversations about Bernstein* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), xix.

the possible exception of Palestine."[67] The arrangement to return to Palestine, however, proved just as tenuous as the tour of Europe. Bernstein's psychoanalyst, Marketa Morris, penned him a letter on 28 August regarding his doubts about both his trip to Palestine and his news concerning the upcoming concert the City Center. "I feel in your letter that some part of you expects my support for the cancellation of Palestine! That you dare not to see it, but that you would want to do something completely radical—for your Resurrection!"[68] She prodded Bernstein, therefore, to follow his own intuition where such decisions were concerned. "The only thing you can do: try to feel whether that is what *you* want. Not what I want!"[69]

For the time being, Bernstein did not share his growing doubts concerning his upcoming trip, and planning for the concerts when forward. He settled instead for divulging his doubts about his long-term career ambitions, and how the Palestine Symphony Orchestra would ultimately figure into the bigger picture. Rosenbluth, it seems, was able to read between the lines of Bernstein's continued vacillations. A letter to the orchestra's patrons presents a thorough understanding of Bernstein's predicament, and also reflects the administration's growing doubts concerning the future of their association with the conductor:

> I had a long talk with Bernstein, and have formed the definite opinion that he cannot be relied upon to contract himself, now or at any time, with our Orchestra. First of all he is undecided himself about his future. He does not know whether to concentrate upon composing or conducting, but in any case, for the first time, he wants to practice both. In addition, it is an open secret, not even concealed by him, that he is out for the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra. Koussovietsky [*sic*]

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[67] Burton, 166.
[68] Marketa Morris to Leonard Bernstein, 28 August 1947, as quoted in Simeone, ed., 233.
[69] Ibid.

> wants him to become his successor and, although there is some opposition to his candidature, in view of his youth, his prospects are nevertheless regarded as quite good ones.[70]

For his part, Bernstein might have derived this impression directly from Koussevitzky, who was pressing the board to settle upon someone who could bring youth to the position. In any case, Rosenbluth rightfully feared that "there will not come anything of these attempts to induce Bernstein to accept the musical directorship," and to this observation he added a subtle dig, possibly a nod to the rumors of Bernstein's homosexuality: "By the way, Bernstein's engagement is off, and he is still as unmarried as he has ever been."[71]

Indeed, the drama unfolding between Bernstein and his now ex-fiancée, Chilean actress Felicia Cohn Montealegre, may have been imperiling his career prospects in Boston. With his understanding of orchestral politics guiding him, Koussevitzky had long been urging Bernstein to settle down for the sake of his career. In January 1947—guided by genuine feelings, along with pragmatic considerations for his career and his responsibility as a good Jewish man to produce a family—Bernstein had become engaged to Montealegre only about a year after they met. Despite Koussevitzky's continued urging that the wedding go forward immediately, Bernstein was non-committal in setting a date. Besides a rivalry between his new fiancée and Coates, there were further objections from his parents, owing to Felicia's standing as the daughter of a Jewish father and a Gentile mother. "One thing I want you to promise me," wrote Sam, "that you'll have her turn completely to Judaism. It is very important for the future of both of you that you know where you are going. Drifting is a sad situation. Knowing where you are going

[70] Felix Rosenbluth to Friends of the Orchestra, 5 November 1947. Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[71] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

is an insurance for a successful trip."[72] His mother was less tactful: "I tell you dear that I'm not too happy about this affair of yours. Aside from the religious angle I still don't think she is the girl for you. You deserve someone better."[73] The internal conflicts arising from Bernstein's sexuality likewise continued, and by September, the engagement had been called off; Bernstein, then, lacked direction not only in his musical career but also in his personal life.

As the year came to a close, plans for Bernstein's return to Palestine progressed: this time, he would be accompanied only by his father, no doubt anxious to return to the Holy Land. As far as concert arrangements, Bernstein continued to exhibit high—if not grandiose—hopes for the orchestra. He suggested not only a performance of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, but he also wished to bring the *Resurrection* directly to Palestine.[74] The two parties settled instead upon Mahler's Symphony No. 4, which would require less performers; Mahler-Kalkstein rejected the idea of *Le Sacre du printemps* as unrealistic considering the orchestra's current predicament.[75] There was also discussion underway concerning Copland's Symphony No. 3, as well as an all-Gershwin program, set to include *An American in Paris*, Suite from *Porgy and Bess* (arranged by Robert Russell Bennett), and *Rhapsody in Blue*, for which Bernstein would conduct from the piano and serve as soloist.[76]

The events then unfolding in Palestine, however, cast a dark shadow over Bernstein's plans. By 30 November 1947, a full-blown civil war was underway, with

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[72] Sam Bernstein to Leonard Bernstein, December 1946, as quoted in Burton, 156.
[73] Jennie Bernstein to Leonard Bernstein, December 1946, as quoted in Burton, 157.
[74] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 17 December 1947, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Helen Coates to Munio Mahler-Kalkstein, 8 November 1947, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1.

militant violence rampant between extremists on both the Zionist and Arab sides. Even as these deadly clashes continued to erupt, Mahler-Kalkstein extended his assurance to Bernstein that recent events had not deterred the Palestine Symphony:

> Here work continues as usual, concert-halls being filled by capacity audiences, in spite of the situation in Palestine (as usual exaggerated by the foreign press), which for us has already become habit. We are travelling in the country as usual, and our Orchestra is being received everywhere more enthusiastically than ever before.[77]

The very next day, members of the militant Zionist group Irgun threw two bombs into a crowd of Arab civilian workers, killing six and injuring forty-two others. An angry mob of Palestinians lashed back against their Jewish adversaries, killing thirty-nine and wounding seven to avenge the deaths.[78] Even as the *Palestine Post* reported the news of these events, they also published a moving tribute in honor of the ten-year anniversary of the death of composer Maurice Ravel and a review of the previous Saturday night's piano recital. The musical life of the country and its concert stages—as it had and would continue to do—stood in unreal discord to the tragedies unfolding in the theater of war.

Bernstein, though, was not adequately reassured by Mahler-Kalkstein's correspondence, as reflected by his response. "I am being pressed on all sides not to go to Palestine in February," he lamented.[79] His elaboration is furthermore revealing as to the amount of exceptionalism he applied to the Jewish cause in Palestine:

> It seems clear to many people that I, as an American, and as a Jew, representing America in the East, would be target number one for Arab hostility. Of course, I don't object to violence per se, having seen a little of it on my last trip to

[77] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 29 December 1947, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[78] "Arab Mob Runs Amok After Bomb Kills Six," *Palestine Post*, 31 December 1947, 1.
[79] Leonard Bernstein to Munio Mahler-Kalkstein, 29 December 1947, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

> Palestine: but those were, at least, Jewish bombs. There is another school of thought which thinks it may all blow over by February. In any case, I have not yet been persuaded or dissuaded.[80]

By January, Bernstein had in fact been dissuaded, cabling his regrets to the orchestra:

> PLEASE UNDERSTAND FINAL DECISION TO CANCEL PALESTINE VISIT THIS SEASON. DOCTORS ORDERS TO REMAIN IN AMERICA FOR PERIOD OF REST PLUS UNCERTAINTY OF YOUR SITUATION. AM HEARTBROKEN WITH REGRET BUT FEEL IT ONLY FAIR TO LET YOU KNOW AT ONCE SO YOU CAN MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS. PLEASE FORGIVE AND UNDERSTAND LETTER FOLLOWS. HEARTFELT GREETINGS.[81]

But the orchestra's reply was anything but understanding. They had been dealt a damaging blow, and they were furious at Bernstein.

> YOUR ATTITUDE INCOMPREHENSIBLE AND UNACCEPTABLE ALL GUEST CONDUCTORS AND SOLOISTS FULFILLED CONTRACT STOP VIOLONIST IDA HAENDEL ARRIVED YESTERDAY MOST CONCERTS TAKING PLACE ACCORDING SCHEDULE STOP AMERICAN VISITORS ARRIVING DAILY STOP PALESTINIAN AND WORLD JEWISH OPINION WOULD UTTERLY DISAPPROVE YOUR DECISION STOP IF YOU FAIL US NON JEWISH GUEST CONDUCTORS WILL FOLLOW SUIT WHICH IN TURN WILL MEAN FINANCIAL CATASTROPHE FOR OUR INSTITUTION STOP PLEASE RECONSIDER AND CABLE REGARDS.[82]

Bernstein, even in the face of the orchestra's pressure and catastrophic assessments of the situation, remained firm in his decision to cancel. Sam, too, urged his son to reconsider, equating the role of a conductor to a clergyman bringing a message of comfort to soldiers in the field.[83] As he nonetheless reaffirmed his decision, however, he now attributed it to medical reasons:

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[80] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[81] Leonard Bernstein to PALPHILORC [Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra], 7 January 1948, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[82] PALPHILORC to Leonard Bernstein, 9 January 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[83] Burton, 172.

> YOU MUST BELIEVE ME DOCTORS ORDERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISION OTHERWISE I WOULD GLADLY COME IMPOSSIBLE TO REVOKE DECISION PLEASE HAVE FAITH IN ME TRYING HARD TO GET [William] STEINBERG AS REPLACEMENT SECOND PERSONAL EXPLANATORY LETTER FOLLOWS.[84]

However, the powers in Tel Aviv were not yet ready to concede. They replied with one final plea on 18 January:

> STEINBERG UNAVAILABLE STOP PLEASE FOR SAKE ALL OF US REVISE YOUR DECISION STOP ABA SILVER ATTENDING CONCERTS IS STAYING PALESTINE FOR NEXT TWO MONTHS STOP ASSURE YOU IF NOT SAFE WILL PLAY TELAVIV [*sic*] ONLY PLEASE CABLE REGARDS.[85]

Although Bernstein's reasons may not have been entirely motivated by his health, it seems possible that his explanations to friends and his initial correspondence with Tel Aviv that alluded to the political turmoil were in fact acting as a cover for an ongoing health issue that—at the height of his early career and with hopes still high to garner the top conductorship in Boston—he was eager to conceal from most of the concerned parties over the preceding months. As Humphrey Burton has noted previously, although the precise nature of Bernstein's health concerns remains uncertain, he may have been faced with his first bout of emphysema.[86] What is clear, however, is that Bernstein did seem to be facing a genuine health crisis that he was anxious to keep under wraps. Helen Coates, for one, was monitoring the press closely. In a scrapbook beside a newspaper

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[84] Leonard Bernstein to PALPHILORC, 11 January 1948, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. William Steinberg, Bernstein's suggested replacement, was a German-born conductor who lost his position as the conductor of the Oper Frankfurt under the Third Reich, immigrating to Palestine in 1936 and serving the orchestra briefly there. He settled in the United States in 1938, where he eventually served as the music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for twenty-four years (1952-1976).

[85] PALPHILORC to Bernstein, 18 January 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. Abba Hillel Silver was a Polish-born rabbi who acted as a leading proponent of the Zionist cause in the United States, intervening to make the case for Israel with President Truman.

[86] Burton, 172.

clipping with the heading "Leonard Bernstein to Undergo Surgery," she emphatically noted in the margin: "Not true!!"

In any case, Bernstein's off-the-cuff letter to Mahler-Kalkstein (which appears not to have survived) elicited serious concern and heartfelt sympathy for his situation. Whatever its contents, there would be no further complaints from the orchestra's administration. Mahler-Kalstein wrote to Bernstein that after reading the "confidential letter," he "[could] see that he [was] positively right to care first of all for [his] health," and that he "[wished] from the deepest of [his] heart for a quick and complete recovery" for the conductor. Mahler-Kalkstein was also quick to consider how he might achieve damage control on Bernstein's behalf:

> It will not, of course, be easy to persuade the press and especially our people that your inability to come is connected with your state of health (especially if I have to keep the nature of your treatment confidential, which I will) but I hope "tout de même" to succeed. Anyway dear Lenny, don't take it now too much to your heart; you try to recover and I will try to manage something…I hope dear Lenny that although not coming now you will keep me informed about your heath and that you will give me information when your next coming to Palestine will be possible.[87]

The orchestra did not waste time getting in touch. After a month without contact they reached out once again, alerting Bernstein of their intention to dispatch Henry Haftel, the concertmaster of the first violin section, to speak with him concerning "matters for which [Bernstein was] best placed to assist him."[88] Topics under discussion were set to include prospective improvements to the ensemble's "extremely poor" music library, the "awkward" financial standing of the orchestra, and which artists, with

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[87] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 27 January 1948, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[88] Felix Rosenbluth to Leonard Bernstein, 27 February 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

Bernstein acting as a facilitator, "would wish to make it a point of honour in helping the Orchestra in these difficult times by giving benefit performances."[89]

Only two days following his resignation from the New York City Symphony, Bernstein met Haftel in March. Aside from their apparent discussion of the matters described above, Haftel had also come to the United States with another goal in mind. Mahler-Kalkstein, while reaffirming his confidence in Bernstein in the aftermath of the fallout from his cancelled visit, solicited his assistance in recruiting prominent artists for benefit concerts in coordination with Haftel:

> I am sure that you, dear Lenny, can be of a great help to [Haftel], for all the great artists in States surely know of your devotion to our cause and especially to our orchestra. It will surely be easy to you to introduce Haftel to your fellow artists and maybe persuade them to lend us their help.[90]

Additionally, Haftel invited Bernstein to take over the artistic directorship of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra—as the latter had previously suggested—allowing him to function in a sort of lesser role of responsibility from that of a musical director. Bernstein certainly did not want to rule anything out at this point, but with the directorship of the Boston Symphony still unresolved, he held himself aloof and did not yet commit.

Haftel, like Rosenbluth before him, privately expressed his doubts concerning Bernstein's intentions. "Leonard Bernstein, after being silent for almost two weeks, suddenly invited me to a gorgeous dinner and indicated the possibility that he might be willing to come to Palestine for the beginning of the season for 2 ½ months," Haftel wrote privately to the orchestra.

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[89] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[90] Munio Mahler-Kalstein to Leonard Bernstein, 9 February 1948, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

> He resigned recently from the directorship of the New York City Center Symphony (clipping enclosed) and immediately after this release I phoned him to ask him whether such resignation means some good news for us. This was a few days before he invited me for dinner, as mentioned above. I cannot report in this letter all the details of our talk which lasted for many hours…The trouble with Bernstein is that he can never make up his mind.[91]

However, everything changed when, following Koussevitzky's final concert at the Boston Symphony on 13 April 1948, it was announced that Charles Munch would assume the music directorship. As the retiring Maestro's trusted protégé, this must have come as a great blow to a hopeful Bernstein. Now, he made the decision to commit himself more fully to the plight of the Palestine Symphony: like anyone else, he wanted to feel valuable, to be where he was needed. As the conductor prepared himself for his second European tour, he reflected on his decision to accept the newly-minted title of artistic director to Koussevitzky. Still, his thoughts were also with his mentor's prospective first trip to Palestine, perhaps another matter that he had discussed with Haftel:

> I want to tell you before you read it in print that I have finally decided to accept the artistic directorship of the Palestine Orchestra. I could no longer resist their plea. They need me so badly, and I can really help. The first thing I want to accomplish is to have the joy of seeing you there, inspiring and leading this orchestra. They love you so; and I have a profound conviction that you would have a deep joy and a sense of rightness in this experience. Won't you please try to come this winter? I shall be there only two months—October and November; but I will direct the policy and program of the entire year. I keenly feel the justice of this decision, and I pray that you do also.[92]

As also revealed by Haftel's private correspondence, there was a different sort of drama brewing where Koussevitzky was concerned, in no small part due to Bernstein's attempted interventions on behalf of his mentor:

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[91] Henry Haftel to PALPHILORC, 20 March 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

[92] Leonard Bernstein to Serge Koussevitzky, 21 April 1948, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 33, Folder 18. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

> As concerns Koussevitzky, a very disagreeable thing happened. Bernstein himself admitted that he had made the horrible mistake to tell K. that we cannot invite him because of his conversion, whereupon K. got furious and does not want to have anything to do with us. Bernstein wants me to repair what he did and arranged an appointment with K. for me for tomorrow. I heard the Boston Orchestra under K. and it is really a miracle, and I congratulated K. after the performance.[93]

A subsequent report from Haftel penned a few weeks before he departed the United States, however, reveals a subsequent resolution of the conflict:

> I was also received by Koussevitzky and, with great effort, succeeded in placating him. It was a very difficult job and I had to use all the persuasion at my command; Bernstein congratulated me upon my success in this respect. When I left, Koussevitzky kissed me, and the door is now open for any further approaches we might need to him. He explained the reasons for his getting converted to me and stated that he is 100% Jewish and proud of it.[94]

Whatever had gone wrong in the past, Bernstein and Haftel's efforts to smooth things over with Koussevitzky were a success, and he would travel to Palestine during the following season.

As the finer points of Bernstein's relationship to their organization were still being negotiated, the orchestra's leadership laid out for the first time in detail their vision of the Palestine Philharmonic's role and function in the greater cultural and political life of the country: past, present, and future. The six-page manifesto, "Some Notes on the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra," contains a number of subheadings, several of which sought to answer Bernstein's own concerns. Its foundation, the author noted, took place

> with the double purpose of salvaging some of the best Jewish musicians from Nazi-oppressed Europe and of giving them the opportunity to rebuild their lives on the basis of their own profession in the Jewish homeland, and of giving music-loving Palestine a first class symphony orchestra.[95]

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[93] Henry Haftel to PALPHILORC, 20 March 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[94] Henry Haftel to PALPHILORC, 31 March 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[95] "Some Notes on the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra," March 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the document describes the complex political circumstances that had both necessitated and facilitated the character of the ensemble:

> The Orchestra had fittingly been called "child of the disturbances" for it was founded at the height of the 1936 riots and its busloads of musicians with the accompanying convoy—from its very inception it was a travelling orchestra—soon became a familiar sight on the roads. Over 5 years were passed in wartime when, to the slogan of "good music for the troops" the Orchestra greatly intensified its activities and now—once again—it is making music in a land driven by strife. But in spite of all the difficulties and hazards the Orchestra has never ceased its function. At present the Orchestra is the only body which performs outside the Tel Aviv area. As far as it is humanly possible it is keeping to its schedule of concerts throughout the land. Concerts in Jerusalem have, for the time being, had to be abandoned but concerts in Haifa are being given in spite of the dangers of the journey and that they are appreciated is evidenced by the crowded halls which greet every performance.[96]

The significance of the text above was to be proven time and again in the ensuing years, and with Bernstein as a prominent character in the unfolding drama. The ensemble that would soon be known as the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was a distinctive product of its station in history; it was also, however, a potent political tool, and would remain so. At this early juncture, its leadership made no mistake of the fact that this was, as Bernstein spoke of it, a Jewish orchestra: a musical body formed by Jews, composed of Jews, intended for Jews. As such, it would function upon the world stage as a symbol of identity for the Jewish nation. The message, however unspoken, was one meant to resonate: neither the Nazis of the past, nor the tanks and bombs of the presently unfolding wars, would stifle the ambitions of this diverse group of musicians. Even in the face of tremendous hardship—as a symbol of the greater Jewish people whom they represented—the orchestra was intent on standing in dignity and defiance amidst the difficult circumstances to which they could attribute their rise: the music, like the people making it, would continue. In this spirit, a special sort of orchestra began to reach beyond

[96] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

its birth pangs, to grow into a force within both the cultural and political life of a budding nation. With the help of Bernstein and a number of other sympathetic figures of prominence, it would eventually prove a formidable power on the international music scene as well. There, its function was not to symbolize difference or defiance, but rather to represent togetherness and similitude. Much like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir,[97] the world's premier Jewish orchestra would grow into an ambassadorial tool by which a marginalized group could relate to the masses of the other. Bernstein could not have known it at this early juncture, but he was to assume the role not just of a musical adviser, but that of its primary diplomat.

* * *

As Bernstein boarded the Queen Mary to undertake his European conducting engagements, he announced his intentions to the press in attendance for his departure. "It will be an honor and a privilege to have this opportunity to serve the Jews of Palestine," he stated.[98] First, however, he was bound toward lands to which many Jews were still anxious to venture: Austria and Germany. His musings to Coates during his engagement with the Bavarian State Orchestra reveal the same guarded thinking that had led him to arrive at the "sixty-percent Nazi" statistic he had quoted to her the previous year; only now, these stereotypes were at last being dispelled.

> But what a country! One forgets in America that Germany is a land of beauty, and comes to think of it as a steel-clad place, like Mars, with everyone in steel-clad helmets forging weapons. Not at all! And Bavaria is a dream-world. God, there's so much beauty and joy—why can't there be some peace? Must people go on plotting, being opportunistic, making war, being afraid? […]

[97] For a detailed examination of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, see Michael Hicks, *The Mormon Tabernacle Choir: A Biography* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
[98] American Fund for Palestinian Institutions newsletter, April 1948, as quoted in Burton, 175.

> The orchestra seem to "love me," despite the three strikes on me of being under thirty, American, and Jewish. One violinist told me at this morning's rehearsal that there were maybe two conductors who could do Schumann as well as I, and they were both over eighty! My biggest compliment to date. That from a German![99]

Bernstein went on to conduct what must have been one of his most poignant concerts to date, as he described to Coates: "I conducted a 20-piece concentration camp orchestra (*Freischütz*, of all things!) and cried my heart out."[100] The orchestra was comprised of survivors from Dachau. The timing was indeed a historic one, for during Bernstein's time in Germany, on 18 May 1948, Israel formally declared its statehood. As noted by Burton, some of the survivors even pleaded with Bernstein to take them with him on his next trip to the Holy Land; he would later obtain jobs for two of them.[101]

Relations between Bernstein and the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra seemed to have returned to a state of normalcy, even in the aftermath of his unexpected cancellation and the Koussevitzky drama he had unwittingly helped to ignite. The orchestra and its new presumed artistic director, however, were soon to find themselves on yet another collision course that would result in bitter disagreement: this time, the cause of tension would be political in nature and threaten the strides Haftel had made in building a bridge to American musical elite sympathetic to the orchestra's cause. With the 1948 war still raging, a politically naïve Bernstein made the ill-fated decision to lead a benefit concert for the Palestine Resistance Defense Fund, to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York on 1 July 1948.

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[99] Leonard Bernstein, "Two Letters to Helen Coates," in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 130. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[100] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 11 May 1948, as quoted in Burton, 176. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[101] Burton, 177.

On the surface, Bernstein's decision to participate in such an event seems consistent with his earlier endeavors on behalf of Israel. What Bernstein seems not to have understood, however, was that Israel was rife with internal conflict. A right-wing resistance movement headed by future Prime Minister Menachem Begin and including the terrorist group Irgun—who, as previously noted, were not averse to carrying out violent attacks on the civilian population to get their point across—had placed themselves in direct opposition to Israel's reigning head of state, David Ben-Gurion. The bitterness between the two factions would be long-standing, with differences first arising over the handling of British forces still in the region. Led by Begin, Irgun participated in tactical operations, the participants of which did not answer to any official government hierarchy. Most famously, they elected to bomb the British military headquarters situated at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem; in another incident, Irgun kidnapped two British sergeants, executing them in response to death sentences carried out against some of their own members. In planning the concert, Bernstein had seemingly failed to realize that the Palestinian Resistance Defense Fund was directly linked to Irgun. Clearly out of his depth on matters of internal Israeli politics, Bernstein had chosen an unpopular side, perhaps due to a superficial knowledge of their resistance to British military presence, though this remains unclear. Only months later, in an open letter to the *New York Times*, Albert Einstein decried Begin and Irgun as ultra-nationalist, chauvinist, racial supremacists whom he likened to the Nazis themselves. "It is inconceivable," Einstein wrote, "that those who oppose fascism throughout the world, if correctly informed as to Mr. Begin's political perspectives, could add their names and support to the movement he represents."[102]

[102] Albert Einstein, "New Palestine Party," 4 December 1948, *New York Times*, 12.

The reaction to Bernstein's actions appears to have been silent shock. Although no letters have been found that indicate any official protest on behalf of the orchestra's leadership, contact appears to have stagnated to a record low in the months prior to and after the concert. Still surviving, however, is a lone cable of protest composed by Martin Rosenbluth, brother of Palestine Philharmonic President Felix Rosenbluth. An eleventh-hour plea sent on the very day of the scheduled concert, its contents would seem to indicate that the frosty silence was no coincidence.

> ALTHOUGH NOT AUTHORISED FORMALLY I FEEL JUSTIFIED TO PROTEST ALSO ON BEHALF OF MY BROTHER FELIX ROSENBLUTH…ARE YOU AWARE OF THE RECENT OUTRAGE OF IRGUN CHARACTERIZED BY MR. HENRY MORGENTHAU AS AN ACTION WHICH QUOTE WAS DOING MORE TO SHATTER THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL THAN ALL THE PRECEDING ATTACKS OF THE ARAB LEAGUE COMBINED UNQUOTE. MR. MORGENTHAU…URGED AMERICANS NOT TO SUPPORT IRGUN SAYING SUCH SUPPORT WOULD BE A STAB IN THE BACK OF ISRAEL…THEY ARE NOT PARTICIPANTS WITH ISRAELS DESTINY THEY HAVE NOT THROWN IN THEIR LOT WITH ISRAEL YET THEY HAVE INCITED REBELLIOUS ELEMENTS TO MUTINY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL.[103]

Even worse, according to Rosenbluth, the "original purpose" of the concert funds "was the acquisition of [fighter] planes."[104] While the public outrage had caused them to relent and state that the concert funds would now be used "to repatriate displaced Hebrews to Palestine, an activity to which there could be no possible objection," Rosenbluth cautioned Bernstein to be prudent in his assessment of the Palestine Resistance Fund and not go forward with the intended benefit:

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[103] Martin Rosenbluth to Leonard Bernstein, 1 July 1948, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[104] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

> WHILE NOT DOUBTING FOR A MOMENT YOUR GOOD FAITH YOU SHOULD REALIZE THAT SUPPORTING TODAY IN WHATEVER FORM THE SO CALLED PALESTINE RESISTANCE DEFENSE FUND ADMINISTERED BY PEOPLES WHOSE RECENT ACTION WAS APT TO UNDERMINE THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE JEWISH STATE CAN UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE JUSTIFIED…[AND IT WOULD] STILL BE INDEFENSIBLE FROM A POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW THAT YOU LEND YOUR GOOD NAME AND YOUR SUPPORT TO THIS GROUP…ON BEHALF OF MY BROTHER AND MANY FRIENDS HERE AND IN PALESTINE I URGE YOU TO RECONSIDER YOUR APPEARANCE TONIGHT AT THE WALDORF.[105]

Rosenbluth's plea, however—along with the dissent registered by actor Henry Fonda and Metropolitan Opera singers Jennie Tourel and Robert Merrill, who withdrew their participation in the concert upon learning of the organization's terrorist ties—seems to have only made Bernstein more obstinate. [106] Instead of cancelling the event as Rosenbluth and others had hoped, he added the funeral march from Beethoven's *Eroica,* which he inexplicably declared to be "in memory of the 20 Irgun soldiers who had died on the beaches of Tel Aviv,"[107] evoking images of Normandy that he perhaps imagined would resonate with the American public.

But Bernstein had exercised a profound misjudgment; his political gamble would not pay off. A story carried in the *New York Times* under the headline "Bernstein Concert at Waldorf Picketed," revealed that opponents "paraded before the main entrance to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel last night protesting a concert featuring Leonard Bernstein, as

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[105] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

[106] "Bernstein Will Play for Irgun," *New York Sun*, 1 July 1948. As revealed by Rosenbluth's telegram, the *New York Sun*'s report implicitly indicates that most of the outrage seems to have stemmed from Irgun's dissent against the reigning Palestine government of Ben-Gurion rather than its terrorist activities directed against the Arab population. According to the article, Bernstein's friend and collaborator Tourel defiantly announced that Irgun's "attack on the official Palestine Government" made it "imperative" for her to disassociate herself from the event. A spokesman for Henry Fonda attributed his client's withdrawal to his "[sympathy for] the government of Palestine," while Merrill allegedly felt "the concert would place him in a controversy in which he did not want to be involved."

[107] Press Statement, Leonard Bernstein Collection, as quoted in Burton, 181. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

conductor and piano soloist."[108] According to the article, Bernstein attempted to justify his participation by emphasizing that the concert's funds would now be used to repatriate displaced Jews to Palestine. In a flimsy attempt to clarify his obvious ignorance of the internal politics of Palestine, Bernstein declared that when the concert was originally planned two months prior, "all the militant groups in Palestine were united."[109]

Even more disturbingly, the event served as a literal platform for Irgun, a member of whom spoke at the event. Zvai Leumi, under the alias "Jacoby," was given an opportunity to assure the audience that "members of Irgun have sworn never to raise arms against their brothers."[110] While Bernstein's original intentions were no doubt motivated by his concern for the Jewish population of Palestine, this bizarre event exemplifies his lifelong tendency to align himself with radical political elements before acquiring a thorough grasp of the ideals to which he was lending his support. This trend would perhaps most famously be taken to task by Tom Wolfe in his 1970 journalistic essay "Radical Chic: That Party at Lenny's."[111] Although one-sided, Wolfe offers Bernstein's courting of the Black Panther Party as an example of the trend by which America's celebrity elite adopt radical political causes in an attempt to appear politically *en vogue*, grotesquely revealing of just how sheltered the upper echelons of society are from the realities of modern political discourse. Throughout his career, Bernstein would espouse a number of political views that put him outside of the mainstream, including famously

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[108] "Bernstein Concert at Waldorf Picketed," *New York Times*, 2 July 1948, 24.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Originally appearing in *New York* magazine, the essay was later printed in Tom Wolfe, *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970).

calling for the worldwide destruction of all nuclear weapons at the height of the Cold War.[112]

After the concert went ahead, Martin Rosenbluth expressed his private distaste to his brother Felix: "…you will see [from the enclosed clippings] that Bernstein went through with the concert in spite of all objections raised by many quarters."[113] Yet he was also willing to forgive the conductor's seeming ignorance of the politics surrounding the situation: "The fact of the matter is that Mr. Bernstein apparently did promise to conduct the concert prior to his departure from Europe, some two months ago, and that he did consult Dr. Silver before he gave his consent."[114] Apparently, tongues had been wagging about the entire debacle. "Dr. Silver," Rosenbluth complained, "according to the story told to our friend Robert Silverman by Bernstein's father in Boston, indicated that he cannot see my objections."[115]

Perhaps, with the new season quickly approaching, the orchestra's administration was eager to let Bernstein off the hook for the Irgun concert fiasco; aside from approximately a month of silence following the event, no one was willing to take him to task. Still, Bernstein seems to have been self-conscious concerning his standing in Tel Aviv. On 5 August 1948, Helen Coates tactfully addressed the Orchestra's silence in a wire to Felix Rosenbluth: "MR. BERNSTEIN ANXIOUSLY AWAITING CONFIRMATION ARTISTIC DIRECTORSHIP HAS NOT YET BEEN CONSULTED

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[112] For an extensive view into Bernstein's politics, please see Barry Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2009).
[113] Martin Rosenbluth to Felix Rosenbluth, 6 July 1948, Israel Philarhmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[114] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[115] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. As previously noted, Hillel Silver, a prominent member of the American Zionist movement, had only just arrived for Bernstein's second series of concerts in Palestine before the latter cabled his intentions to cancel his appearances.

ON SEASONS PLANS PLEASE CLARIFY."[116] Judging by Rosenbluth's handwritten memo to Mahler-Kalkstein, he was not feeling as forgiving as his brother. "Please delay response until consulting with me. Bernstein is now seeking approval after his failure with Etzel [Irgun].[117] We must carefully consider what we are going to do about this issue."[118] What needed "consideration," as indicated by his final statement, remains unclear, but it may signal some hesitation on Rosenbluth's part to follow through with granting Bernstein's previously proposed title.

Whatever bad blood grew out of the Irgun matter, the newly-titled Israel Philharmonic was not about to divorce itself from the most preeminent musical personality to initiate a long-term relationship with its organization, and plans moved forward for Bernstein to take up occupancy in Israel for a period of approximately two months in October 1948. Although he would still operate in an official capacity and not merely as a guest conductor, orchestra officials compelled him to settle for the less illustrious title of "musical adviser," perhaps owing to the fact that he could not remain for the entire season, a problem he himself had once pointed out when he initially refused the artistic directorship.

This time accompanied by Coates, Bernstein landed in Haifa via Air France on 25 September, six days after he was scheduled to arrive; his flight was presumably delayed due to ongoing conflicts erupting in the region. Nevertheless, the Israel Philharmonic charged forward, and Bernstein ushered in the 1948-49 season in Tel Aviv with an all-Beethoven program consisting of the Overture No. 3 from *Leonore*, Piano Concerto No. 1

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[116] Helen Coates to Felix Rosenbluth, 5 August 1948. Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[117] "Etzel" is an acronym of the Hebrew initials for the Irgun organization.
[118] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. Rosenbluth's memo, translated by the author, appears on the bottom right of Coates's telegram.

(with Bernstein conducting from the piano), and Symphony No. 7. The program was repeated four times in Tel Aviv on 5 and 9-11 October, twice each in Haifa and Jerusalem on 6-7 and 14-15 October respectively, and once more in Rehovot on 21 October, for a total of ten concerts. As noted by arts critic Franz Goldstein in the *Palestine Post*, Bernstein's debut lent the season opener "an atmosphere of tension and great expectations."[119] Just as in 1947, Bernstein did not let his public down. Already in his evaluation of the concert's opening work, Goldstein was gushing in his assessment of Bernstein's abilities: "Bernstein revealed the impetuosity and passion of the true musician, but fully controlled and balanced, with a remarkable feeling for rhythm on the one hand and a certain grace, physical as well as spiritual, on the other." Although he allowed that the Scherzo and the Allegro of the Seventh "seemed…exaggerated in manner," he concluded that "the whole work was played by the orchestra with a verve and delicacy such as we have long not heard." Goldstein's unquestioning praise of Bernstein's achievement continued in his assessment of his skills as conductor and pianist in the concerto:

> …all Bernstein's abilities were again in evidence: his firy [*sic*] musicianship, his youthfulness, his total immersion in the moment. How perfectly he synchronized playing and conducting, how warmly he revealed the youthful spirit of the work, and with what mature sense for dynamics he interpreted the Rondo![120]

Bernstein's final Tel Aviv concert of 11 October, a special subscription series event for servicemen and women was, according to the orchestra's newly-appointed Public Relations Officer S. Wilkinson, "an extraordinary affair." He continued:

> The house was packed to capacity, hundreds of soldiers standing and the Israel Army chiefs—Brigadier Dori, and Chief of Operations Yardin and Mrs. Ben Gurion, representing her husband—there. Literally hundreds of people were

[119] Franz Goldstein (i.e. "FRANGO"), "Bernstein's Beethoven," *Palestine Post* 15 October 1948, 4.
[120] Ibid.

> turned away. I can never remember such scenes before the concert hall doors. Bernstein received an amazing ovation. He has again taken the country by storm. Today, Tuesday, Saturday's special concert is already completely sold out and will have to be repeated Monday![121]

Bernstein's Tel Aviv concerts, though, were only the beginning of what would prove a truly historic endeavor on his part, memorable in both the history of the Israel Philharmonic and in his own biography. With Bernstein's early successes in Israel, Wilkinson had seen his opportunity, seizing the reins of his new role and launching a prolific letter-writing campaign to wealthy patrons of the Israel Philharmonic. At the close of each of these letters, he mused about the diplomatic capability of the ensemble as a tool by which world opinion could be shifted in Israel's favor:

> I am more than ever convinced that the orchestra is Jewry's foremost artistic institution, and more, that it is the platform on which those of all creeds and nationalities can meet. Our Foreign Office and Press Club for the foreign correspondents are always most keen to get their visitors to the I.P.O. concerts and it is undoubtedly doing a most important piece of work in respect of evoking goodwill for Israel and world Jewry.[122]

Another letter puts this same idea even more candidly in political terms, directly connecting Bernstein's efforts to Israel's greater destiny:

> Leonard Bernstein is proving an enormous success this season as on the first occasion he was here. You would be amazed to see the huge queues waiting for tickets and it would give you some idea of what the Orchestra means in the life of the community. I myself know people who have given up essentials so as to buy a subscriptions ticket for the concerts and our Foreign Office makes extensive use of it for their important guests abroad. *The I.P.O. without doubt is a prime instrument for gaining friends for Israel and for Jewry at large* [author's emphasis].[123]

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[121] S. Wilkinson to Itzchak Norman, 12 October 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[122] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[123] S. Wilkinson to Mrs. E. Baum, 14 October 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

Wilkinson's letters once again reveal that, in terms of the scope of its national socio-political importance, this was indeed no ordinary orchestra.

Bernstein, for his part, was likewise no ordinary conductor. Decades before his famed 1989 concert of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall, Bernstein already enjoyed making grand political statements guaranteed to secure the historical station of his concerts. In the case of the Berlin Wall program, Bernstein would conduct an orchestra comprised of East and West Germans; as if this were not a sufficiently grand gesture, he also rendered the celebrated text of the finale, Friedrich Schiller's *An die Freude* (Ode to Joy), more suitable to the times by substituting the word *Freude* (joy) with *Freiheit* (freedom). In the case of the Israel Philharmonic, Bernstein pushed the boundaries further still. He would traverse warzones, defy UN sanctions and, in the case of the 1967 concert atop Mount Scopus, proclaim Israel's victories from literal mountaintops even as the dust from its bombs had barely settled upon the ground of the defeated.

In Jerusalem, Bernstein faced a far more precarious situation in terms of security. The *New York Times* characterized the atmosphere in dramatic fashion:

> Leonard Bernstein of New York conducted the opening concert of the Israeli Orchestra here last night to an obbligato of distant shell explosions from the frontier area of the shooting truce. Col. Moshe Dayan, military commander of the Jerusalem area, and other Jewish leaders of the Holy City attended the all-Beethoven program.[124]

Yet, as Goldstein reveals, Bernstein's activities in the early weeks of his tenure in Israel were not limited to those within the purview of a musical adviser. Just as his father had earlier defined his role, Bernstein saw his duty as one of a sort of musical clergyman bestowing a message of hope on his war-torn people. Goldstein implicitly praised

[124] "Bernstein Conducts in Israel," *New York Times*, 16 October 1948, 8.

Bernstein's heroism in his display of political solidarity with the Israeli people during his first stint in Jerusalem: "Earlier, Mr. Bernstein visited Israel Army forward positions and talked with frontline troops. A number of enemy mortar bombs fell nearby during his visit."[125] Once again Bernstein had proven that music was the ultimate source of camaraderie, even on the battlefields: "While passing one Army post, the conductor heard a piano being played inside. Entering, he found a soldier whiling away his odd-duty time at a piano, which is Mr. Bernstein's own instrument, and the two pianists chatted for a short time."[126] As they did on his previous visit, the Israeli press followed their musical prophets's every move. Moreover, Bernstein was bestowed his first national award: the Medal of the Defenders of Jerusalem.[127]

But it was during the final presentation of his Beethoven program in Rehovot that Bernstein would have the chance to prove his devotion to Israel's cause in the face of danger. In the audience that night to witness the unforeseen spectacle were Chaim Weizmann, who the following year, was elected as the first President of Israel, and Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., wife of the former Secretary of the Treasury under Roosevelt and one of Israel's staunchest and most influential supporters. Wilkinson describes the spectacle as follows:

> This concert was interrupted by two air-raid warnings, the first coming in the middle of Bernstein's playing the 1st Beethoven Piano Concerto. At the close of the first movement, he was called to the wings while military police explained that the warning had just been given. Bernstein, however, returned immediately to the piano and continued as if nothing had occurred and, of the whole crowded hall only one couple left to go to the shelter.[128]

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[125] "Bernstein's Beethoven."
[126] Ibid.
[127] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to S. Yellin, Esq., 19 October 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. This distinction continues to be awarded today for actions that support and defend the Jewish people.
[128] S. Wilkinson to American Fund for Palestinian Institutions, 28 October 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

Bernstein later characterized his overwhelming feelings as he performed the second movement of the concerto: "I never played such an Adagio. I thought it was my swan song."[129]

Only a day after Wilkinson told of the events in Rehovot, Bernstein wrote Koussevitzky one of the most impassioned letters he was ever to compose in Israel.

> How to begin? Which of the glorious facts, faces, actions, ideals, beauties of scenery, nobilities of purpose shall I report? I am simply overcome with this land and its people. I have never so gloried in an army, in simple farmers, in a concert public. I am in perfect health, and very happy—only a little tired from the fantastic schedule we have here: 40 concerts in 60 days, here, in Haifa, in Jerusalem, Rehovoth, and so on. The concerts are a marvelous success, the audiences tremendous and cheering, the greatest being special concerts for soldiers. Never could you imagine so intelligent and cultured and music-loving an army!
>
> And Jerusalem—what shall I say of my beloved Jerusalem, tragic, under constant Arab fire, without water (only a pail a day)—with machine-guns outside accompanying our performances of Beethoven Symphonies! I have visited the fronts, entered Notre Dame, where we hold out a few paces from Arab-British guns, inspected the strategic heights around the city, and the Palmach bases. I have played piano in hospitals for the new wounded of the Negev, and in camps for soldiers and "kibbutzim" people. I have been decorated with the Jerusalem Defense medal and the Palmach insignia. I have almost grown to be a part of all those wonderful people and history-making days. Believe me, it will end well: there is too much faith, spirit, and will to be otherwise.[130]

Bernstein had penned a love letter to a land; he had been deeply moved by his experiences thus far. Above all, he appears to have wanted to be part of the making of history. Now, he felt tangibly that at last, he had been.

Yet, there were more history-making days still to come. Bernstein was in the early stage of his latest program, which he would repeat a total of eight times between 16 October and 6 November in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Although it included American repertoire, it was still a long way from the "all-American" event he had

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[129] Burton, 184.

[130] Leonard Bernstein to Serge Koussevitzky, 29 October 1948, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 33, Folder 18. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

envisioned for the trip he had cancelled earlier that year: Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, his own *Fancy Free*, George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, and Johannes Brahm's Symphony No. 4 as a finale for good measure: an abbreviated concert excluding Brahms would be given in Haifa on 24 November. Franz Goldstein, calling Bernstein "Public Darling No. 1," lauded the largely American program, neglecting to comment on Bernstein's Brahms interpretation. Of his efforts as a pianist-conductor in *Rhapsody in Blue*, Goldstein observed that Bernstein "recreated the concerto-like piano solo in a different manner than…others, dreamily, like a romantic (which he is), with an affinity to Chopin. To me it was a deeply moving event."[131] Bernstein's own composition impressed him even more greatly, particularly the striking rhythmic vitality: "[The ballet] opens with a catching rag-time syncopation, followed by the Blues. It develops a motoric rhythm and colourful counterpoint, happily continuing the Ravel-Stravinsky line with its bold, parodistic wind-strings."[132] He was equally impressed with the orchestra's interpretation of the relatively new work, but subtly referred to how far his people had come in the three years since the close of the Second World War. "Never before have I heard the orchestra 'swinging so hot.' For the first time in 1948, I really felt fancy-free."[133]

Another critic from the *Palestine Post* (writing under the abbreviated name "Mo") was slightly more traditionalist in his assessments, hailing Bernstein's "rendering of Brahms' Fourth Symphony with great feeling and tenderness."[134] He readily dismissed Barber's masterwork *Adagio* as "merely imitative of Wagner," granting that Gershwin's

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[131] Franz Goldstein, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post,* 31 October 1948, 4.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Mo, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post,* 24 October 1948, 4.

Rhapsody was "magnificently played." Of Bernstein's ballet, he mused as follows: "It is, without doubt, thrilling jazz music, splendidly instrumented and wittingly syncopated, but it lacks musicality—some basic idea—perhaps with exception of the 'Opening Dance,' which includes some charming melodic developments." Still, his praise of Bernstein's effect on the Israel Philharmonic conjured images of magical impact: "The orchestra seemed in high spirits for Bernstein as well as Brahms, instructed and enlivened by this real pied-piper, Leonard Bernstein."[135] In Haifa, another reviewer observed: "Unusual for Haifa audiences, their ovations after the concert lasted for a long time, and they were reluctant to leave."[136]

For the Tel Aviv concerts of 9, 11, and 13 October, Bernstein again struck a balance between modern and traditional—conducting from the piano, a given for all of the concerts on his trip—undertaking Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*, Ravel's Piano Concerto, and Schumann's Symphony No. 2. Even more significant than this latest string of concerts, however, was Bernstein's national radio address in Tel Aviv of 10 November 1948, which was also broadcasted in the United States. Highly emotional and uplifting, it must have come at just the right time for a war-weary public that was growing progressively more fond of Bernstein, not only due to his latest series concert endeavors, but also because of his attempts to boost the morale of those who were afflicted or fighting on the front lines. Bernstein's rhetoric brims over with religious imagery and enthusiastic political fervor designed to elicit sympathy for the Israeli public overseas and generate resoluteness in the nation itself. "I am actually not the type who ever believed in miracles, having been conditioned by the tough, hard-

[135] Ibid.
[136] "Bernstein Liked in 3 Roles," *Palestine Post*, 22 October 1948, 7.

boiled teaching of New York City, and having a soul educated in the Broadway theater. For me, the only miracle has always been music," Bernstein mused.[137]

> But I never honestly expected to see miracles with my own eyes—military miracles, agricultural miracles, wonders of every kind that can befall a new little nation. For example, a new state that improvised a few months ago, and is already an adult, accepted by the people as final authority, and with complete trust. Everyone had expected infinitely more internal opposition and dissidence. This is the first miracle—unity growing from a bed of disunity.
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> Then the others follow thick and fast: The miracle of children with simple Molotov bottles driving hordes of Arabs back from an attack on a kibbutz. A successful defense with two machine-guns against an armored column. The ships full of immigrants arriving at Haifa to be greeted by Jewish uniforms and port authorities. A complete census carried out thoroughly, quietly and successfully between 5 P.M. and 12 midnight last Monday. Ten Jewish Soldiers lost in Galilee against hundreds of Kaukji's dead. An army of incredible efficiency and uncomplaining patience, grown up overnight. Friendly Arabs who have joined the Haganah. The complete success and freedom with which Arabs and Jews live and work side by side in Nazareth. The fantastic miracle of the Negev [Desert]. The magic of being able to make any kind of ground fruitful.
>
> *And then, the greatest of all—the transformed Jew, the metamorphosed Jew, who had already racially forgotten what it is to feel inferior, to house that delicate strain of self-defense which he learned elsewhere: The new Jew who approaches the ideal of what an active, dedicated, strong, constructive human being has to be* [author's emphasis].[138]

Some political factions would have considered the statement highly inflammatory: for instance, his labeling of incidents of violence committed by children as "miracles." In any case, Bernstein was beginning to recognize and understand the phenomenon of a "New Jew" through the lens of the State of Israel: a land in which the Jew could at once feel the historically unfamiliar sensation of connectedness and integration. As implied by Benbassa and Attias and discussed early in this chapter, Bernstein had perhaps needed to discover the "elsewhere" on foreign soil that could allow him to reconcile fully his own Jewish experience in the United States.

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[137] Leonard Bernstein, Radio Address, 10 November 1948, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 71, Folder 50. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[138] Ibid.

Military and geographic matters aside, Bernstein also had a lot to say about the miracle that resided in the musical life of the country. After scolding Leonard Lyons for prematurely reporting the disbandment of the orchestra in his newspaper column ("Shame on you, Lenny," the other Lenny chided), Bernstein praised Israel as "the most musical nation, per capita, on earth."[139] He then likened the plight of the Israel Philharmonic to that of the public at large, citing inadequate salaries, the lack of a stable concert hall to call home, and the overworking of orchestra members, who were forced to take side jobs teaching lessons to make ends meet. Nonetheless, Bernstein surmised, "what they are doing for this country and its people is impossible to overestimate." Describing one of his special concerts for soldiers in Jerusalem, Bernstein incredulously observed:

> Imagine 2000 soldiers simultaneously given leave on morning in a city under siege! Imagine them crowding into the Edison Theatre, filling every nook, suspended literally from the roof, curled up on window-sashes, packed into the aisles and staircases—all to hear a Brahms symphony. And imagine further that this all-Army audience knew so well what they were hearing that not one person applauded between movements of the symphony. At the end—the shouting and screaming was an almost unbearable tribute.[140]

Owing to the orchestra members' condition of "nervous strain" and the outstanding demand, Bernstein took the opportunity to directly appeal to his compatriots listening back home. "Yes, the orchestra is the lifeblood of Israel culture: and I am dedicated to the task of seeing it flourish," he declared. "Isn't there one of you back there in America, or a group of you, who can quietly put a few millions into the bank, and let us draw the interest from it? It seems too easy: I am amazed it hasn't already happened."[141]

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[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

After a well-received, one-time program in Rehovot that included Schumann's Symphony No. 2, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 15, and Maurice Ravel's *La Valse*, Bernstein undertook his next major series of concerts. His newest program was headlined by Copland's Symphony No. 3, followed by Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 15 and Ravel's *La Valse*; between 30 October and 19 November, this lineup would be used for a total of nine concerts in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem. Upon revisiting Copland's symphony, Bernstein returned to his previous critique of what he felt a cumbersome finale; this time, as he explained to Copland, he took corrective action: "After the fourth performance it has begun to sound, and quite magnificent at that. I must confess I have made a sizeable cut near the end and believe me it makes a whale of a difference."[142] Although Copland ultimately favored the changes, he understandably found his once-mentee's editorial initiative "pretty nervy."[143]

Nonetheless, what Bernstein disliked about the symphony's finale was more than compensated for by the rest of the work, as he explained to Israeli concert audiences in Tel Aviv:

> One may, perhaps, justifiably criticize the Finale, in which the grandiosity becomes almost too much. But this is more than atoned for by a noble and touching first movement (slow), a rousing, brilliant scherzo, and a third slow movement of such original pathos that it ranks with the greatest adagios of our century. And one must not forget that the Symphony was written expressly for Serge Koussevitzky, and the grandeur of that magnificent conductor must have had great influence on the shape and manner of the symphony. It is truly a symphony in "The Koussevitzky Manner."[144]

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[142] Leonard Bernstein to Aaron Copland, 8 November 1948, as quoted in Burton, 165. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[143] Burton, 165.
[144] Leonard Bernstein, "Notes for Concert Talk or Lecture on Copland's Third Symphony," Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 71, Folder 49. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Eager to defend the work from anticipated criticisms—indeed, *his* criticisms—Bernstein delivered a lecture on its merits, cast in the familiar voice of his later educational endeavors. As an additional incentive, Bernstein took the opportunity to prepare the public for the arrival of his conducting mentor. Curiously, his notes from the occasion survive as one of the earliest examples of a pedagogical endeavor on the conductor's part; he would, of course, reference Copland's Third Symphony on more than one occasion as part of his *Young People's Concerts*. In fact, for the purposes of his 1 February 1958 lecture, "What is American Music?" Bernstein would cast the work as one of the most profound examples of high American concert music, electing to close the event with a performance of one of its movements: the Finale, conducted by Copland himself.[145]

Bernstein's next concert appearance, the open-air concert in Beersheba of 20 November 1948, would go down in history as one of his most memorable in his career; the event would likewise assure Bernstein's place in Israeli history. On 20-21 October 1948, Israel emerged triumphant from its clash with Egyptian forces in the Battle of Beersheba; they have held the strategic Negev Desert "capital" ever since.[146] Now, only a day before the concert, the United Nations had ordered Israeli troops out of the region. In place of their departure, however, came the arrival of an armored bus carrying Leonard Bernstein and thirty-five volunteers from the orchestra he had rounded up to give an impromptu concert in support of the defiant soldiers.

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[145] In the context of the 1958 lecture, Bernstein lauded the Finale as follows: "And now, as a final example of all this, I want you to hear part of the Third Symphony by Aaron Copland - which has a lot of these American qualities we've been talking about—jazz rhythms, and wide open optimism, and the simplicity, and the sentimentality, and a mixture of things from all over the world—a noble fanfare, a hymn—everything."

[145] Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 340.

Aside from the desert locale, the concert site itself was also quite unorthodox: a make-shift "amphitheater" comprised of an archaeological dig sight; the "walls" were in fact mounds of earth. South African journalist Colin Legum described the unusual atmosphere poetically in the *Palestine Post*:

> The well of the amphitheatre is alive with chattering soldiers—men and women of the front-line forces—a motley army. Few wear regular uniform. The dress is as diverse as the people. There are soldiers from the five continents—Jews born in Palestine, from the British Commonwealth and United States, from Morocco and Iraq, Afghanistan and China, the Balkans and the Baltic, and even one from Lapland.
>
> Three thousand crowd into the amphitheatre. Hundreds find concert seats on the parapets of the surrounding buildings—silhouetted like miniature minarets on massive white foundations. Fittingly enough, an ambulance "presented in honour of Eddie Cantor" drives up to the entrance of the amphitheatre bringing wounded soldiers from the near-by hospital to participate in the gala performance.
>
> The air is dense with unsuppressed excitement…Cheers greet the arrival of the Israel Symphony Orchestra. The cheers are renewed when the young conductor, Leonard Bernstein, is escorted to an improvised conductor's stand by the military commander…the conductor raises his arms. The first thousand dust-stained figures rise to their feet as the strains of the national anthem, "Hatikvah" pour forth in rich symphonic chord.[147]

The program was certain to be a crowd-pleaser, with Bernstein drawing from previous repertoire and conducting entirely from the piano: Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 15, and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Bernstein had not only succeeded in bringing American symphonic jazz into the concert halls of Israel—via his long-held Jewish idol, Gershwin—but to its deserts as well. Indeed, the concert proved a rousing success, not just musically, but perhaps militarily. As Bernstein's sister Shirley later explained:

> Israeli intelligence officers later told Lenny that Egyptian reconnaissance planes, flying high over the area and seeing this mass movement of troops proceeding on foot, reported to their superiors that Israeli forces were converging on a given point, from which place the Egyptians assumed that the Israeli [army] would

[147] Colin Legum, "Music Went Forth from Beersheba," *Palestine Post*, 28 November 1948, 4.

> launch an attack. The Egyptians accordingly made preparations to meet an attack stemming from Beersheba. It never occurred to the Egyptians, of course, that in the midst of the war, all those soldiers were heading for a concert, not a battle.[148]

According to Shirley, intelligence officials had told her brother that this lucky accident had made all the difference in the course of the war. "Lenny was sure that the importance of the incident was exaggerated for his benefit," Shirley relented, "but the story made him feel good anyway."[149]

Nevertheless, the moment was undoubtedly a triumphant and memorable one for those who had been there to experience it. Incidentally, among the eager masses that night was a youthful Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's fifth prime minister—whose peaceful ambitions were cut short by an assassin's bullet in 1995—then the commander of the Harel Brigade, an infantry division that played a decisive role in both the Negev struggle and the 1948 war at large. Years later, in a meeting with two violinists during his tenure as Prime Minister, Rabin would proudly recall his attendance. "He told them about a concert Leonard Bernstein had given, at the end of the War of Independence, in Beersheba," recalled policy adviser Kalman Gayer.[150] "Some of the audience of soldiers were in jeeps. And Rabin remembered the concert, he remembered what they had played, the entire program."[151]

Despite his success in Beersheba, Bernstein was soon to embark upon his most ambitious program yet.[152] During his tenure at the New York City Symphony, Bernstein had presented a critically underwhelming performance of Mahler's *Resurrection*

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[148] Shirley Bernstein, 111.
[149] Ibid.
[150] David Horovitz, ed. *Shalom, Friend: The Life and Legacy of Yitzhak Rabin* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1996), 181.
[151] Ibid.
[152] In addition to the previously noted concert of 24 November in Haifa, Bernstein led another concert that rehashed previous material after Beersheba; on 22 November in Tel Aviv, he conducted the orchestra in Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 15, and Ravel's *La Valse*.

Symphony—a work he had equated publicly to the plight of the budding Jewish state; now, he would bring the composition directly to Israel. As the conductor had already learned, much of the American public had yet to warm to Mahler, considering his symphonies unwieldy and excessively emotional. But would the Israeli musical public receive the Jewish Austrian composer's work differently? For his own part, Bernstein must have possessed high hopes that they would, for he regarded the musicality of the populace at large as far above the norm. "One of the banes of my existence here," he had noted in his radio address, "is that almost everyone seems to be a genius at the piano, or a composer of intense seriousness. One cannot walk along the streets of Tel Aviv without hearing at least two concertos being studied at any one moment."[153]

Indeed, Bernstein's second gamble on the relatively obscure *Resurrection* would prove far more fruitful in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa than it had been in New York. He repeated the program, which opened with J. S. Bach's celebrated *Brandenberg Concerto No. 3*, six times from 21-29 November to sell-out crowds. Writing again for the post, Franz Goldstein's review reflected a far more nuanced and patient grasp of the work than that of Bernstein's New York critics:

> Mahler's Second, with the Chorus-Finale…was influenced by Beethoven's Ninth; there are other strong influences from Schubert, Berlioz, and especially Wagner. Small wonder, for after all Mahler was a greatly gifted conductor…The ecstasy of this amazing Opus was the right material for the musician of the evening, Leonard Bernstein. It was almost a miracle how transparent he made this powerful orchestral apparatus sound, not only conducting, but playing it like one instrument.[154]

[153] Bernstein, Radio Address.
[154] Franz Goldstein, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 5 December 1948, 4.

There was, however, one aspect of Mahler that was not well received: his pragmatic conversion to Catholicism. Even posthumously, he would not be pardoned any more readily than Koussevitzky had been:

> Although Mahler's creation was not an unmerited choice for such an occasion, it does not seem altogether appropriate to associate the "Resurrection" Symphony with the re-birth of Israel. Mahler's whole life-work centres round the idea of death and resurrection, but in the conventional Catholic sense: although of Jewish extraction Mahler professed the Catholic faith, and even Mahler's devotees are not likely to claim that he was dreaming of Israel's resurrection.[155]

Just as he had conceived of Koussevitzky as being just as Jewish as he was, so did Bernstein embrace Mahler as one of his own. Still, in taking a dig at Mahler's conversion, Goldstein was perhaps echoing the silent sentiments of a sizable part of Bernstein's audience, who were perhaps less apt to forgive the transgression of conversion after suffering for their own Judaism during the Third Reich era. In any case, having at least succeeded in convincing Israeli audiences of Mahler's musical credentials, if not his Jewish ones, Bernstein's resolve to take the composer's symphonic *oeuvre* elsewhere in the world (as he later would so famously do) must have been heightened by this early experience.

There is, however, a final noteworthy addendum to Bernstein's last round of concerts. On 28 November 1948 in Tel Aviv, he organized a special "Farewell Concert" for the audiences of that city, meant to add to the coffers of the Israel Philharmonic Pension Fund. For the occasion, Bernstein led performances of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Haydn's Symphony No. 45, Dorothy Pennyman's *A Kitchen Symphony in Three Movements*, and a finale consisting of "improvisations" upon the works of various

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[155] Ibid.

composers and the performances of famous conductors.[156] Most importantly, the conductor engaged the audience in an often-overlooked premiere of one of his most well-known works: a composition he had undertaken serious work on during his time in Israel. For the sake of the concert, he called it *Dirge for Piano and Orchestra*; it would eventually come to be known as Part IIa., "Dirge" from his Symphony No. 2: *The Age of Anxiety.* Here, Bernstein conducted the movement from the piano for the first time, giving the Israeli public a glimpse into his ongoing compositional process. In the concert's program notes, Peter Gradenwitz lauded the "the first performance of a Dirge for piano and orchestra composed by Leonard Bernstein during the few leisure hours left to him on his crowded Tel-Aviv days and completed in full score just in time for tonight's concert," praising the work as "the most expressive song of lament showing the composer's style developed on distinctly novel lines."[157] The symphony figures prominently into the story of Bernstein's subsequent trip to Israel. Yet here, Bernstein had already embarked on his first partial performance of the work.

Yet another preview of future career endeavors was offered during Bernstein's final days in Tel Aviv. As Franz Goldstein described the event:

> The most curious concert ever given by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra took place one morning last week at Tel Aviv Ohel Shem Hall: it was, furthermore, the most secret concert played by any orchestra, for nobody was invited, no tickets were sold, and only Mr. Leonard Bernstein, the conductor, and Mr. Mahler-Kalkstein, secretary of the orchestra, sat in the Hall.[158]

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[156] Although I have found no further information, it appears—owing to limited information and knowledge of Bernstein's history of entertaining audiences with his abilities—that these "improvisations" probably comprised an encore of Bernstein, with the help of the orchestra, mimicking the style of various conductors; this was then perhaps followed by Bernstein excerpting from a number of famous piano solos, presumably in the form of a medley.

[157] Peter Gradenwitz, Program Notes on Bernstein's Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety,* as quoted in Simeone, ed., 257.

[158] Franz Goldstein, "Most Fateful Rehearsal," *Palestine Post*, 30 November 1948, 2.

The "concert" consisted of various short works that Bernstein had rehearsed with the orchestra—including movements from the orchestral works of Haydn, Tchaikovsky, and Beethoven, and the overture to the *Barber of Seville*; they were being interpreted by twenty young conductors competing for a scholarship provided by America's Koussevitzky Foundation. Besides proving another example of Bernstein's desire to utilize music as a bridge between the country of his birth and his "second home," the little-known event is also an early indication of Bernstein's commitment to carry out the ideals he had learned from his mentor at Tanglewood: namely, his responsibility to contribute to the development and education of future generations of conductors. Although still acting under the financial umbrella of his mentor, in Tel Aviv—perhaps for the first time—Bernstein had exercised some degree of initiative and independence in leading such a contest. Indeed, as his biography proves, Bernstein's desire to carry on the pedagogical torch of Koussevitzky was a lifelong pursuit. As Goldstein put it: "[It was] a most important rehearsal, because it was one that may bear its full fruit only in the very distant future":[159] whether or not any conductors of consequence were born of the proceedings, Goldstein was correct, for Bernstein had unwittingly planted a seed vital to his own future legacy.

Despite the bad blood that had run between Bernstein and the orchestra administration following the Koussevitzky feud and the Irgun debacle, which may or may not have contributed to their caution in preemptively stripping Bernstein of the lofty title of artistic director, the powers that be were once more singing the praises of their Wunderkind musical adviser. In only two months, he had led a whopping thirty-eight concerts, appearing as a soloist at the piano in thirty-two of them. With his desire to bring

[159] Ibid.

music to Israel, Bernstein had traversed the seemingly impassable circumstances created by the ensuing combat;[160] his concerts had defied air raids, dangerously close enemy missile fire, and even a UN decree which had effectively sealed an area of land under international law. Moreover, each of these concerts had taken place in houses packed to capacity and beyond. Whether or not Mahler-Kalkstein and the other political powers surrounding the orchestra felt distaste for the impetuousness Bernstein had made clear was beyond their power to control, they knew a sensation when they saw one. More than a sensation, he was a potent public-relations tool, boosting the morale of military forces and common citizens alike. Indeed, Bernstein provided positive international publicity for the cultural sophistication of the country and its people, who benefited from recognition abroad as a legitimate national entity. Perhaps most importantly, as America's own musical darling, he served as a conduit of goodwill toward the Jewish state in the United States, which the Israelis desperately needed to remain their ally in order to ensure their survival.

Once again, Mahler-Kalkstein offered Bernstein the directorship of the orchestra. Bernstein would be expected to come to Israel twice yearly, for a total of six months. In addition to a generous salary and fully paid travel, the orchestra would provide Bernstein with an automobile and an apartment in Tel Aviv, with the possibility of an additional house in the country; both properties would be fully maintained at the expense of the orchestra.[161] After such a successful trip, it was likely a flattering and a tempting

[160] Bernstein was the first conductor to travel along the so-called "Burma Road" to Jerusalem, a secret make-shift passageway allowing some travel to and from the city during the 1948 War.
[161] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 21 November 1948. Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1.

proposition. But true to form, Bernstein would not commit. He was on his way to Europe again, and would take his time to come to a decision.

While the orchestra waited, they continued to tout the successes of the trip. In a thank-you letter written in response to a donation from Ira Gershwin and his wife (a contribution that Bernstein had solicited), Mahler-Kalkstein praised the success of both Bernstein and the music of Gershwin:

> Leonard Bernstein literally conquered the country and if you could have heard for yourself the brilliant way in which he played George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue and the extraordinary enthusiasm this work evoked, we are sure you would have been very happy…[we are delighted] to have had the opportunity to give these works to an audience which is fully able to appreciate them.[162]

However young he might have been, Bernstein had already formed deep connections in the realm of American music, and to greatly celebrated figures in the United States. Whether or not he accepted the directorship, Bernstein was opening a great many doors for the orchestra and, by association, the Jewish nation.

For over a month, Bernstein did not commit himself to a response. On 31 December 1948, he sheepishly sent his formal refusal:

> MILLION REGRETS CANNOT ACCEPT PERMANENT POST WILL TRY TO COME TWO MONTHS MARCH APRIL 1950 KOUSSEVITZKY HOPING TO BE FREE TO COME FEBRUARY 1950 PLEASE NO DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS HAVE MOST BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES OF LAST VISIT LOVE TO ALL ALSO FROM HELEN LETTER FOLLOWS.[163]

Although the orchestra expressed its disappointment, there was no time to do anything but keep moving forward. Not only did they need Bernstein's help making plans for next season, but they also hoped that he could help finalize an arrangement with Koussevitzky

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[162] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonore Gershwin, 25 November 1948, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[163] Leonard Bernstein to Munio Mahler-Kalkstein, 21 December 1948, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

and were counting on his help with a projected American tour. Before they could embark upon their first large-scale international tour, however, the orchestra would have to be expanded to accommodate a wider variety of repertoire. Officials hoped Bernstein could lend his support to the endeavor. Additionally, plans were in the works for a building fund to construct a permanent home for the orchestra in the form of their own concert hall in Tel Aviv. Their primary fund-raising idea, as communicated to Coates, was to solicit the services of conductors and soloists willing to lend their support: once again, they were counting on Bernstein's help with recruitment.[164]

As plans went forward, Bernstein sent a follow-up letter to Mahler-Kalkstein, apologizing again and further clarifying his position. Once again, his health had become a concern; additionally, he was beginning to ponder his future as a composer more carefully:

> It was hard as hell sending you that cable, but it had to be done. Especially after all our talks and negotiations I was reluctant to have to reply negatively. But there is a limit to what I can do. My health is really suffering from the strain—there was a slight collapse in Rome, and this week in Buffalo—and the time has come to do something. I have decided to make 1949 a composing year, and have given up <u>all</u> conducting beginning in April until 1950. I have cancelled my trip to Europe this Spring—even Holland; I have asked for a Sabbatical leave from Tanglewood this summer; I have again refused the N.Y.City Symphony. I have great plans for a theatre work here, and a few other pieces. All this, too, will enable me to grow inside as a person, which this life of running-around utterly prevents. I don't have a chance to get acquainted with myself. So—it will not be possible for me to come before March 1950…I'll be glad to prepare a tour [of America] in the Spring for the following Autumn, and I think you should plan that way.[165]

[164] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Helen Coates, 30 January 1949, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1.
[165] Leonard Bernstein to Munio Mahler-Kalkstein, 22 January 1949, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Bernstein also expressed definite opinions about how the orchestra should proceed in its search for a musical director: "The only other alternative is to engage Isler Solomon permanently, which is not a bad idea at all—but that is up to you."[166]

However, as they soon were to learn, Bernstein did not really feel it was "up to the orchestra" alone to decide on a permanent leader. When Rosenbluth wrote him to announce their intentions to offer the directorship to Paul Paray, a French Gentile conductor-composer who had assisted Jewish musicians during the German occupation at considerable personal risk, he ignited a firestorm.[167] To be sure, his abrupt tone, taken on the heel of a newly-renewed partnership between the two parties that had seen Bernstein enlisted in a growing list of significant responsibilities to the ensemble, would have come as a shock:

> A contract has been signed with Mr. Paray committing him to work next season with the Orchestra for four months…Mr. Paray has, of course, accepted also the full artistic responsibility for the Orchestra.
>
> I am sure this is news you will like to hear, as it has always been your opinion and our greatest wish that the Orchestra should come under the musical directorship of an outstanding personality. You know very well how much we wanted you to be that person, but unfortunately you could not commit yourself. We think Mr. Paray, with whom I also had the opportunity to make a thorough acquaintance, is the right man for the job…I wish to thank you sincerely for the time and the valuable and deeply appreciated advice you gave the orchestra while you were its Musical Adviser. I can assure you that your appearance with our people is always an inspiration to the whole ensemble and that I personally, along with all your other friends and admirers in the country, look forward to your return.[168]

Bernstein was outraged. Through Edward Norman, an acquaintance who helmed the American Fund for Palestinian Institutions, he made his anger known. The freshly-

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[166] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[167] "Paul Paray: Biography," <http://www.paulparay.com/bio.htm>, accessed 30 September 2014. Paray refused to hand the names of Jewish musicians over to authorities during the era of the Vichy government; he also took on additional Jewish orchestra members whose lives had been threatened by the Nazi conquest of France.

[168] Felix Rosenbluth to Leonard Bernstein, 5 June 1949, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 1. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

dismissed musical adviser was pulling no punches in choosing this route of communication: he intended to make it abundantly clear to Rosenbluth how quickly the orchestra's American financial relationships might evaporate if he remained unhappy. However, there was seemingly more to the story than his abrupt termination. Bernstein had spent some weeks assisting a Mr. Surowicz, presumably a member of the orchestra who had come to the United States scouting for talent, and had lined up some good prospects for the Israel Philharmonic. Suddenly, he had been cut off with no finalization of the verbal agreements he had made with these men. Norman's cable addressed these complaints at length, further reporting that Bernstein was furious; he further warned that Bernstein's resignation as musical adviser would likely effect the orchestra financially.[169]

For his own part, Bernstein's only cable on the matter was far more succinct: "INSIST IMMEDIATE INFORMATION CONDUCTORIAL SITUATION IN PALPHILORC EXTREMELY DISTURBED YOUR TACTICS."[170]

Meanwhile, Norman's cable had achieved the desired effect of shaking things up in Tel Aviv, as revealed by Rosenbluth's reply:

> DISTURBED BY COMMUNICATION RECEIVED THROUGH AMFUNDPAL SINCERELY BELIEVE YOUR INDIGNATION UNJUSTIFIED STOP TRUST YOUR SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISRAEL AND ORCHESTRA WILL PREVENT MAKING STATEMENTS APT TO CAUSE IRREPARBABLE HARM STOP AFTER YOUR DEFINITE REFUSAL ACCEPT DIRECTORSHIP FOLLOWED YOUR PERSONAL ADVICE IN ENGAGING OTHER ONE STOP FOR REFERENCE SEE YOUR CABLE 22ND JANUARY 1949 AND HANDWRITTEN LETTER 22ND JANUARY 1949 OF WHICH COPIES MAILED STOP MEANTIME REPEAT YOUR WORDS QUOTE ONLY ALTERNATIVE ENGAGE IZLER SOLOMON WHICH NOT BAD IDEA BUT THAT UP TO YOU UNQUOTE IN OPTING RATHER FOR PARAY ASSUMED YOUR ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL SELFUNDERSTOOD PARAY PERMITTED US DISCLOSE AGREEMENT

[169] Edward Norman to Felix Rosenbluth, [n.d.] June 1949, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2.
[170] Leonard Bernstein to PALPHILORC, 11 June 1949. Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

> ONLY AFTER HIS RETURN PARIS…AGREE WE SHOULD HAVE ADVISED SUROVITZ OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH PARAY WHICH STARTED ONLY BEGINNING MAY STOP PLEASE EXCUSE THIS INADVERTENT OMISSION STOP RE USA MUSICIANS SUROVITZ TOLD THEM DEFINITELY REPLY COULD BE GIVEN ONLY AFTER CONSULTING BOARD TELAVIV THEREFORE THEIR CLAIMS UNFOUNDED STOP AS TRUE FRIEND OUR ORGANISATION YOU MUST UNDERSTAND SITUATION WHICH CANNOT BE ALTERED AND I COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT MOST CORDIAL PERSONAL GREETINGS ROSENBLUTH.[171]

In continuation of an ongoing correspondence that had developed subsequent to her journey to Israel, Mahler-Kalkstein was meanwhile attempting to extract information from Helen Coates that he could continue to feed to the press in view of Bernstein's deafening silence toward Tel Aviv. After commencing with several paragraphs of small talk, he tacked on his request casually: "Incidentally if you can let me have news of Lennie's doings, do so that I can pass them on to the papers here. The Post particularly would welcome the items of news."[172] He had also, however, been enlisted to engage Bernstein directly, appealing to their friendship in an attempt to diffuse the situation. After a long-winded recap of the justifications Rosenbluth had provided in his own correspondence, he casually attempted to elicit from the conductor some confirmation of his proposed round of concerts at the close of the year. "All other conductors, including Koussevitzky," he added for good measure, "having already announced their programmes, we are only short of yours, and hope to get them at the soonest possible date."[173]

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[171] Felix Rosenbluth to Leonard Bernstein, 29 June 1949, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[172] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Helen Coates, 11 June 1949, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[173] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 8 July 1949, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

Bernstein, for the time being, had no intention of engaging the orchestra further on these or any other matters. However, a surviving copy of a letter he penned to Norman, soon to meet with orchestra officials in Israel for himself, reveals that he still had plenty to say. Now, he was engaging in an ongoing campaign to sow seeds of doubt in Norman's mind where the orchestra's administration was concerned, particularly in reference to Paray's standing as a non-Jewish conductor. Presumably, he was wielding his power in order to throw a wrench into the orchestra's financial backing for their upcoming American tour:

> An American visit—on purely musical grounds—is at best dangerous, given the competitions of the great American orchestras. What the Israel Orchestra has to give in this country is its unspoiled essence as the Israel orchestra, not merely an orchestra. If this essence is violated—as it certainly must be under the Paray plan—there is no real selling-point. Furthermore, a non-Jewish conductor, with no particular relationship to Israel, further negated this essence. It must be realized that half the value of such a tour is a propaganda value, of great political and sociological power. This value can hardly be maintained under these new conditions.
>
> I cannot close without registering resentment at the way all this has been handled by the Orchestra management. It betokens a lack of trust-worthiness which makes it difficult for me to conceive of working hand-in-hand with them again. They have made a mockery of my function as musical adviser by first delegating to me this authority, and then ignoring it in matters of basic importance. I have had communications from them in which they try to make their case on the grounds that once I had refused the musical directorship, and had recommended that they find another, they were free to do as they chose. But they acted during my continuing tenure as adviser, and neglected to consult me on any aspect of it. In fact, I have reason to believe that Mr. Surovicz knew of all this while he sat in my house, and had me sign a renewal of my contract as adviser! This is shocking behaviour. I learned of the whole affair only through hearsay, hints, and casual information; and I was officially apprised of it all by the Orchestra only after I cabled them to confirm the rumors.[174]

Meanwhile, the Israel Philharmonic's leadership mounted their own campaign with Norman prior to his upcoming visit. Mahler-Kalkstein, who had been selected for

[174] Leonard Bernstein to Edward "Itzhak" Norman, 9 July 1949, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 29, Folder 63. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

the task of meeting him to discuss the situation, painted the administration's position in a far more flattering light, attaching a copy of their previous cable to Bernstein. "As you can see," he pleaded, "we have always been trying to get Mr. Bernstein as our musical director, but, unfortunately, without success. Following his own advice, we have chosen another conductor for the post of musical director, and you, after having had the occasion to meet Mr. Paray personally, will agree with us that the choice was a good one."[175]

How this conflict was eventually resolved remains unclear, but the degree of Bernstein's anger is reflected in his ignoring letters from the orchestra administration over the next several months. "So, no reply to my last letter…?" Mahler-Kalkstein puzzled in a short note written on 26 September.[176] It had not been the first of his letters to go unanswered. "No! I cannot believe it, after all the explanations I have given you I deserve at least a reply."[177] It would not come until 18 October, and its contents can only be inferred from Mahler-Kalkstein's extant reply. Although Bernstein was still seething, he agreed to fulfill his appearances in 1950 and began negotiations over possible programs. Mahler-Kalkstein expressed his relief. Apparently referring to Bernstein's own words, he assured him once again that he would come to learn his concerns had been unfounded:

> It was so nice to receive finally your letter of 18 October. I am earnestly sorry to have been instrumental in creating your anger but I firmly believe that one day I will be able to clear myself of your "accusations" and this will happen neither through "time" nor "charm" but through solid facts.[178]

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[175] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Edward Norman, 8 July 1949. Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[176] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 29 September 1949. Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 6. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[177] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[178] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 30 October 1949. Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 6. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Then—perhaps to leave the door slightly open—Mahler-Kalkstein threw in a hint of doubt concerning Paray: "The season has started with a real 'Schwung' and promises to be very good indeed. Of course it is yet to be seen if Paray will fulfill all our expectations!"[179]

As planning of Bernstein's upcoming programs progressed, relations still appeared tense, with Bernstein largely communicating his responses through Helen Coates. Knowing that public opinion might be unfavorable, Coates inquired about the orchestra's position concerning Bernstein's proposal that he might be allowed to bring his Doberman along, to which he had grown attached; Mahler-Kalkstein did not dare deny the request, despite his own doubts about public perception.[180] Meanwhile, Bernstein continued to build up the musical life of Israel. "Israel is probably the most musical nation, per capita, on earth," Bernstein wrote during this period. "The orchestra is the most diligent and industrious to be found: the audiences are hungry for music and possess astute critical power." Yet once again, Bernstein turned to the familiar problem of integration and the compositional direction of Israeli music:

> Composition in Israel is at present battling with its national and international problems. This is a natural state of affairs in a new society, before enough time has elapsed to effect an integration of the various elements which compose it. There are nationalists who insist on Oriental material only; there are disciples of the French school of the twenties; there are composers of German origin, steeped in the strong culture of Berlin and Vienna. They search, they experiment, they juxtapose. And when the society integrates, their art will deterministically follow suit, and a great musical utterance will emerge.[181]

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[179] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. *Schwung* is the German word for swing.
[180] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Helen Coates, 5 January 1940, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2.
[181] Leonard Bernstein, "Essay Re: Music in Israel," November 1949, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 72, Folder 3. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Bernstein went on to reiterate the concept of the New Jew he had first advanced the year prior in Israel, arguing that in spite of present hostilities, he remained convinced of "the inevitable integration and success of the Israeli society, and culture as a whole."[182]

Only several months after his mentor Koussevitzky made his first and only trip to the Jewish state to conduct the orchestra, Bernstein himself returned to undertake another grueling whirlwind conducting tour, and was soon joined by Helen Coates. "I feel as if I had come home and now [that] I am back in Israel, can hardly believe I was ever away," Bernstein told the Israeli Press.[183] His parents would arrive to Haifa soon after for a visit on 1 May, marking Jennie's first trip to the country. For Bernstein, rallying support for Israel among his friends and family, and attempting to convince them to visit the Jewish state, was practically an occupation. Not long after his parents left, he was already lobbying to bring his youngest brother Burton to the Holy Land. "I think it would be the most wonderful thing for [Burtie] to visit Israel, don't you?" he wrote excitedly to his parents on British European Airways stationary as he zoomed across Europe following his own departure from Israel.[184] On this particular voyage, he had also solicited a visit from friend and frequent collaborator, Jennie Tourel, who performed as a vocalist in the latter portion of his stay. After Koussevitzky's successful trip, Bernstein was also working to secure visits from Copland and Blitzstein.

Traveling alongside Tourel, Bernstein ventured to Eilat, a city bordering the Red Sea on Israel's southern-most border, to play a solo piano recital for troops stationed

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[182] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[183] "Bernstein Back," Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Press Release, April 1950, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[184] Leonard Bernstein to Sam and Jennie Bernstein, 24 August 1950, as quoted in Simeone, ed., 283. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

there: an unprecedented treat. As usual, the ambience was intensely dramatic and vibrant. A reviewer from *Ha'aretz* described the scene:

> Bernstein approaches the piano—opens his shirt like a man who has to cope with hard labor and starts performing the 'Sad Rhapsodie' by Gershwin. He puts his whole soul and energy into his playing, he struggles with the [out of tune] piano, an open fight in order to achieve the maximum. When finishing, his face was tired and outworn and he remarks to his fellows, "this was the strangest and most sublime concert."[185]

Bernstein's first program with the orchestra, which he repeated nine times in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa between 2-15 May, included Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Haydn, his own Symphony No. 2, and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4. Commissioned by Koussevitzky, *The Age of Anxiety* was premiered under his baton on 8 April 1949 at the Boston Symphony, with Bernstein at the piano. For the Israeli premiere of the work, Bernstein took on his ever-popular dual role of conductor/pianist. The critic for the Palestine Post, again writing as "Mo," praised the conductor's "lyrical" interpretation of Brahms and characterized his Mendelssohn as "enchanting and graceful," but as he noted, "[the] audiences chief interest was centered on the conductor's own Second Symphony."[186] He praised the variety and emotional nuance of the work:

> The pianist, Bernstein himself, sets out, as it were, on a journey in the company of a girl and three men, diving into the sub-conscious, participating in philosophical discussions or dancing a jazz tune in despair. I found the lonely woodwind introduction extremely moving and full of promise and the later descending scale "into the subconscious" poetically conceived.

He also cited the "rebellious harmonies" of the Dirge, "the light and witty jazz statement" provided by the Masque, and heralded the epilogue as "a home coming to the angelic tonal apotheosis which the romantic masters used to produce."[187]

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[185] Burton, 198-199.
[186] Mo, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 7 May 1950, 4.
[187] Ibid.

Franz Goldstein also reviewed the symphony, though he did not view the work in an altogether positive light: "To my mind, Bernstein's style is influenced by Ernest Bloch in his intellectual approach to irrational problems. There is a transient bow to the twelve-tone scale," Goldstein noted.[188] "The concerto-like piano solo, admirably played by the conductor-composer, has a jazz intermezzo…the epilogue with its trumpet calls reminds one of Mahler, but it is not altogether convincing." In the end, Goldstein's feelings were mixed about the modernist direction in which he felt Bernstein was moving: "Although it is evidence of a great gift, this programme-symphony leaves the impression of a skillful but comparatively unemotional offering."[189] All things considered, however, Bernstein's first 1950 program had been a success, and he offered powerful words to the Israeli public about his latest symphony which held relevance in the midst of their own "Age of Anxiety": "What remained, it happens, is faith."[190]

Indeed, it seems likely that Bernstein had been inspired to compose a symphony based on Auden's poem, *The Age of Anxiety*, chiefly due to its Jewish themes. Although the author himself was not Jewish, the poem is set during World War II; through the character of Rosetta, the work addresses such topics as Israel's long history of diaspora and the persistence of faith during the Nazi era. Curiously, in her lack of ability to reconcile the barbarism of the Nazis, Rosetta recites the *Shema Yisrael*, a traditional prayer and recitation of faith. Following his interest in Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*, in which the *Shema* text takes on a related symbolic significance, Bernstein would compose his third and final symphony, *Kaddish*.

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[188] Franz Goldstein, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 14 May 1950, 4. This bow, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, will become a full-scale endeavor in Bernstein's next and final symphony, *Kaddish*, which would receive its world premiere in Israel.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Mo, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post* 7 May 1950, 4.

Following on the heels of his initial *Age of Anxiety* programs, Bernstein convened with violinist Jascha Heifetz, the Lithuanian Jewish violinist who, like Bernstein's father, had emigrated to America, to offer a series of eleven concerts across Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa throughout the month of May. The first included Haydn's Symphony No. 88, Roy Harris's Symphony No. 3, and Brahms's Piano Concerto, op. 77. Offering a bit of praise for Bernstein's mentor, Mo noted that Bernstein's interpretation of Haydn was "no less enjoyable than Koussevitzky not long ago. We heard the typical gracefulness and classical transcendence of Haydn."[191] He also criticized Bernstein's dramatic liberties with *tempi* that would become all too common in the future, complaining that he "found the *Largo* a bit too slow, so that the movement was turned from a touching but modest fervour to an almost dramatic statement." He cited the "dynamic power" of Roy Harris's composition, noting that the orchestra was in "splendid form" for the performance.

However, Bernstein's efforts were overshadowed in this instance by the performance of Heifetz, who achieved "a rare spiritual harmony [with the Orchestra] such as we have not heard for a long time"; similar praise had been offered to Bernstein upon his first tour of the country. "Heifetz," the reviewer Mo noted, "played...not sentimentally but with the tenderness and clarity the composer demands," so that "we were compelled to admire his technique and even more, the sense and good taste with which he shaped the form and content of the work." He likewise observed that "both conductor and soloist were warmly applauded."[192]

The second program presented by Bernstein and Heifetz, once in Jerusalem on 9 May and once in Tel Aviv 20 May, included Schumann's *Manfred Overture*, op. 115, his

[191] Mo, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 21 May 1950, 4.
[192] Ibid.

Symphony No. 1, and Beethoven's Violin Concerto, op. 61. Again, Mo implied that Heifetz stole the show: "It again became clear…that although this rare musician is able to transmit his conception of the great master to the whole orchestra and even to its conductor, he, nevertheless, never stands out from it by the sheer distinction of his playing."[193] Yet, he reminded, "the whole performance breathed greatness and enchantment, and Leonard Bernstein, the conductor, and the orchestra were no less significant in this occasion."[194]

Between performances with Heifetz, Bernstein gave a program comprised entirely of music from the Americas in Tel Aviv on 30 May, repeating Roy Harris's Symphony No. 3 and adding Mexican composer Carlos' Chávez Symphony No. 2, *Sinfonía india*, Copland's *Dance Episodes from Rodeo*, and Bernstein's crowd-pleasing favorite, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue.* The concert was reviewed succinctly but favorably, with the fervor from the Heifetz concerts still holding a firmer grip on the public imagination. With Bernstein's next ambitious program in the early weeks of June, he would once again seize the spotlight. Offered again nine times across Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, the latest performance included Prokofiev's *Overture on Hebrew Themes,* op. 34, Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 3—featuring soloist Alexis Wiesenberg, rather than the conductor himself—and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. "Mr. Bernstein was most impressive," Franz Goldstein gushed.[195] He found Prokofiev's Jewish-themed work "engaging" but saved most of his praise for the concert's finale: "We have heard Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony played previously by the I.P.O…But never have we been

[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Franz Goldstein, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 18 June 1950, 4.

so strongly impressed by any work of this contemporary as by Mr. Bernstein's youthful, creative interpretation of the symphony."[196]

The conductor's most ambitious event of the entire trip, however, came next: the Israeli premiere of Mahler's Symphony No. 9, *Das Lied von der Erde,* performed on five occasions in Ramat Gan (a suburb of Tel Aviv), Jerusalem, and Haifa; Jennie Tourel and tenor Ernest Garay performed the vocal parts.[197] Just one year before, Bernstein had scored a success with Mahler's weighty Symphony No. 2. Although Bernstein's critics had not been entirely convinced with his equation of the symphony to Israel's own "resurrection," the work was received positively by the Israeli public, who had turned out sell-out crowds for each of his repeat performances. With the Israeli premiere of *Das Lied von der Erde*, Bernstein scored another successful reception to a difficult Mahler work that a less musical public might not have been as willing to embrace from the start. "An eloquent crystallization of intellect and *Weltschmerz*," Mo proclaimed of the event.[198] "The sublime orchestral texture, representing a poignant counterpoint to the solo voices, was made wonderfully transparent. There was, for example, a despairing loneliness in voices and instruments in the last movement that held the audience spellbound." While the work may have been well received and skillfully performed, the undertaking of such a massive symphony nonetheless had the effect of accentuating the shortcomings of the orchestra's lack of a proper hall:

> I am forced to remark on the acoustics of the Ramat Gan Amphitheatre in which these works were heard. The orchestra occupies only a small part of the platform and for this occasion powerful loudspeakers were installed. The music came…sometimes from the loudspeakers and sometimes direct from the

[196] Ibid.
[197] While Bernstein did undertake an additional four concerts after the Mahler performances across Ein Harod, Ramat Gan, and Jerusalem, little record remains of these events.
[198] Mo., "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 24 June 1950.

> performers. At times I even heard split harmonies while the trombones or horns, or the voice were heard highly amplified through the loudspeakers, the strings reached my ear in the natural way.[199]

Finally, the issue of the orchestra's need for a proper hall, upon which Bernstein had already been commenting publicly for nearly half a decade, was beginning to receive some much-deserved backing in the press.

For the moment, Bernstein had other matters on his mind: his ex-fiancée had moved forward with her life, slowly becoming a formidable television actress and taking up a new romance with fellow thespian Richard Hart. Although Hart harbored a drinking problem—and was married with three children—he was said by her friends to be "the love of Felicia's life" and the two were living together in New York.[200] For his part, Bernstein was full of regret for the way things had turned out; now, he wanted Felicia for himself. From Israel, he poured out his feelings to his sister Shirley in lengthy prose:

> I feel, for the first time in my life, jealousy—a growing resentment of her current affair, and a certain knowledge that D.H. [Dick Hart] was horribly wrong for her. Over all this, a real knowledge that she and I were made for each other, as now: that we have everything to give each other. Just as right is my feeling that it would have been wrong to marry when we planned in '47, in struggle with the complex tensions of both our young lives then. It is right now: I would marry her tomorrow, sight unseen, ignorant of all she lived through these two years or so, willing to learn, insatiably eager to learn.
>
> On the boat I was seized by these feelings—and more: a grave intuition that she was in trouble, and needed someone. I prayed it might be me she needed. So strong was this conviction (though I admitted to myself that intuitive deductions are all too easy in mid-Atlantic) that I wrote her a letter explaining my urge. I felt humble writing it, vastly apologetic for the indifferent treatment I had afforded her during her troubled time in California, and in fact all through our "engagement." After mailing it, I was afraid that I had been guilty of bad manners, of possibly trying to disrupt what may have been a good relationship with Hart, of possibly yielding to the impulse of a moment of loneliness. Now I know, weeks later, how sincere and direct the impulse was.[201]

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[199] Ibid.
[200] Burton, 198.
[201] Leonard Bernstein to Shirley Bernstein, 26 April 1950, as quoted in Burton, 199. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

But Bernstein's intentions in writing his sister were not simply to make a declamation; posing a series of questions he wished to have answered concerning Felicia's current state of being, he hoped Shirley would test the waters with her if she refused to send word herself. As the days passed with no conclusive decision from Felicia, his tone grew more angst-ridden and his imaginings even more specific:

> I know there's a real future involving a great comradeship, a house, children, travel, sharing, and such a tenderness as I have rarely felt. I want to comfort her for all her heavy wandering, and to make it right. Only one thing: why does she insist on prolonging the suffering? Is she as sure as you that her present life is not her future? I sure hope she is—I know from some almighty source that Dick was created for other things. And Felicia is for me, because the thought of her makes me strong enough to deserve her.[202]

Weeks later, as he prepared to depart Israel, he took his intentions a step further. While the Israel Philharmonic's leadership was again trying to compel him to take the helm of the orchestra, which he wanted to accept, he declared to Shirley that there was something holding him up: namely, he needed Felicia with him in order to proceed. Just as before, Bernstein did not want the position quite enough, and was willing to put off accepting until some unforeseen perfect day that lay ahead. Before, it had been his professional life he wished to get in order; now, his personal life loomed large as he imagined his rose-colored future.

While Bernstein's love for Felicia on some level is hardly in question, the future of marriage and children he laid out for Shirley was certainly grounded not only in love, but also in tradition. As dictated by Bernstein's commitment to adhere to the markers of Jewishness instilled in him by his parents, he would have to marry, and to carry out his sacred duty of producing heirs to his name. Although Bernstein's parents had expressed

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[202] Leonard Bernstein to Shirley Bernstein, 19 May 1950, as quoted in Simeone, ed., 277. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

concerns about Felicia's tenuous links to Judaism via only her father,[203] Bernstein saw a life with her as an alternative to a far greater sin in the eyes of tradition. Above all women he could marry, Felicia was the one he imagined could help him to fight his homosexual impulses. "I have been engaged in an imaginary life with Felicia," he wrote to Shirley from Israel, "having her by my side as a beautiful Yemenite boy passes—inquiring into that automatic little demon who always sprints into action at such moments—then testing if Felicia were there, sharing with me that fantastic instant…the demon diminishes."[204]

As Benbassa and Attias explain, homosexuality hits straight at the heart of that which is most forbidden to the Jew: the blurring of strict separatism. By remaining wholly one with the self, and wholly other in the world, the integrity of the group is maintained, and thus continues to grow. Although, as Bernstein admitted to Shirley, "the demon…still pokes me when his occasions arise, the old willingness to follow him, blind to any future, blind to the inner knowledge of a certain ensuing meaninglessness—that is gone."[205] For all these reasons and more—for example, the expectations of family thrust on him in his intended career as a conductor—Bernstein needed to need Felicia, to ignore "the demon" which would drive him further from his intended plans and the obligations of his Jewishness.

During Bernstein's summer trip to Israel, discussions were likely underway for the specifics of the upcoming American tour, in which Bernstein would play a significant role. As early as April, the groundwork had already been laid out. "The tour is settled &

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[203] In the Jewish faith, one's Judaism is determined by the maternal parent. Therefore—as in the case of Felicia—one can have a Jewish father and still not be considered Jewish as dictated by traditional law.
[204] Leonard Bernstein to Shirley Bernstein, as quoted in Simeone, ed., 277. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[205] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

as usual I get the sh-- end of the stick," Bernstein wrote to his sister, perhaps complaining in light of his pivotal role in the tour's workload despite Paray's directorship.[206] In December, he returned to Israel to give two programs before accompanying the orchestra back to the United States. The grueling tour spanned nearly the first three months of 1951, with Bernstein conducting a total of twenty-eight concerts from the Northeast to the California coast. His first program, which he would repeat twelve times in Houston, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Tucson, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Toronto, included Mozart's Symphony No. 36, Carlos Chávez's *Sinfonía india*, and Brahms's Symphony No. 4. Franz Goldstein praised Bernstein's maturation:

> Contrary to the "flaming youth" of his first seasons in Israel, the young conductor this time was balanced and well-tempered. Mozart's "Linz" Symphony was rendered with a great upward beat, clear, relaxed, reflected. [With Brahms's Fourth,] Bernstein developed the great contrasts of intensified feeling, the glimmering melody links, as well as the deep melancholy and sense of tragedy. It was a wonderfully mature offering, with dynamic differentiated strings, and the most subtle nuances with the wind-instruments choral-like in sound...Altogether it was a moving farewell performance, but there is no need to fear for the artistic success of our orchestra under eminent conductors like Koussevitzky and Bernstein.[207]

Bernstein's second and final December program in Israel, which included Israeli composer Mark Lavri's symphonic poem *Emek*, along with Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 17 and Schumann's Symphony No. 2, signaled his intentions to likewise bring Israeli music to America's shores; in addition to repeating *Emek,* they would also present works by Odeon Partos, Menachem Avidom (also known as the orchestra's own Mahler-Kalkstein), and Paul Ben-Haim. While the occasion of an upcoming American tour

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[206] Leonard Bernstein to Shirley Bernstein, 18 April 1950, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection Online, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/bernstein/>, accessed 20 October 2014. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[207] Franz Goldstein, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 24 December 1950, 4.

should have lent a festive atmosphere to the event, the performances were again overshadowed by the acoustical problems presented by yet another unsuitable hall. As calls for a home for the orchestra were beginning to reach fever pitch, Mo complained of the insufferable state of affairs in his review for the *Palestine Post*.

> At the I.P.O.'s Farewell Concert at the Habimah Hall on Sunday those people who came not only to bid farewell to the conductor, Leonard Bernstein, and the orchestra, but also to listen to some music were disappointed as the offerings of the orchestra were almost inaudible. The reason for this was not only the deplorable acoustics of the hall but also the fact that there were no arrangements made at all for the seating of the musicians on the huge Habimah stage. They had to play on the open 20-metre high stage which absorbed the music completely so that it never crossed the footlights.[208]

Though Bernstein would soon convince the orchestral management to grant priority to building a hall, it would be seven years before he would see his and the orchestra's dreams realized, when the Mann Auditorium became the new home of the orchestra in 1957.

With the close of Bernstein's work on the American tour came a new chapter both in the conductor's professional and personal life. Soon after its conclusion, Koussevitzky died, dealing a powerful blow to Bernstein; as he had daydreamed from afar throughout the summer of 1950 in Israel, Felicia would soon become his wife. There would be new professional goals, including a focus on composition that would make the 1950s his most productive decades as a composer. And, of course, there would be *West Side Story*. Bernstein's association with the orchestra would likewise change in the years ahead; 1951 marked the end of the period of his closest association. This high level of activity would not be equaled until his later years, following his tenure as musical director of the

[208] Mo, "Musical Diary," *Palestine Post*, 27 December 1950, 4.

New York Philharmonic from 1958 to 1969. Nonetheless, the relationship would never fully stagnate, and despite the increasing demands of his personal and professional lives, significant milestones loomed ahead.

Chapter Three: Rising Fortunes, 1951-1963

"As Mr. Leonard Bernstein stood poised, baton in hand, the buzz of animated excitement which had swelled through the first-night audience died away to a perfect stillness and the orchestra led into the first bars of Beethoven's 'Consecration of the House.'"

- From the *Jerusalem Post*, on the 1957 inaugural concert of the Frederic R. Mann Auditorium

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Having left Tel Aviv with Bernstein in tow, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, traveling in two separate groups at the close of the year, were once again complete when the last of its ninety-four members arrived to New York on 30 December 1950. The impending fifty-six concert tour was funded by the American Fund for Israel Institutions (hereafter AFII, and formerly known as the American Fund for Palestinian Institutions): the same group whom Bernstein had threatened to turn against the orchestra during the bitter feud over the hiring of Paray the previous year. He and the orchestral administration had by now made their amends, and Bernstein was to serve a crucial role in the undertaking of the ensemble's first American tour—indeed, their first large-scale tour of any kind. This was certainly a historical landmark for the world's foremost Jewish orchestra, a momentous occasion that would catapult them onto the international scene. And yet, as explained in the last chapter, this was no ordinary orchestra, and it would be no ordinary tour. Eager to receive their most captive audience, the American press, the backers of the Israel Philharmonic had a great deal more than music on their minds.

The tour began at a massive charity event for two-thousand attendees at one-hundred dollars a head, held at the Waldorf Astoria grand ballroom on 8 January 1951. At the behest of the AFII, the press in attendance had agreed to refrain from all musical

critiques until the orchestra's official debut on 13 of January. Nonetheless, there was still plenty to discuss: namely, the impressive roster of speakers who took to the podium to welcome the orchestra on behalf of the American people, including Koussevitzky, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, 20th Century Fox President Spyros P. Skouras, and Abba Eban, Israeli Ambassador to the United States. Prominent among the welcoming committee was Robert F. Patterson, a key figure in the mobilization of forces during World War II. "It is an honor to play a part tonight in welcoming the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra," announced the former Secretary of War in his pre-concert remarks.[1] He praised the Israeli spirit, and in particular their willingness to fight so courageously for freedom and independence. "What is it about Israel that has captured not merely the imagination but the conscience of the American people?" Patterson mused. Naturally, his answer connected the future destiny of both America and Israel by aligning the latter's early struggles with those of his own compatriots.

> It is the pioneering spirit of Israel. The pioneering instinct still has its strong appeal to the American people. It was in that stage of our life that our own nation grew to its great stature of today. We could see the visible product of vigorous energy and creation, and so it is as we look across the seas to Israel.[2]

Here, only six years after America's greatest military victory, a principal leader in the war effort that so many held up as an idealized age of togetherness—of selfless and relentless collective pursuit toward a noble goal—was praising a nation comprised of many of that war's most tragic victims, and passively willing that they work towards a common goal together in the future. The eloquence was powerful and unmistakable, however much it was a master class in propaganda.

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[1] "Justice Frankfurter, Ex-secretary of War Patterson Lauds Israel's Achievements," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 10 January 1951, <http://www.jta.org/1951/01/10/archive/justice-frankfurter-ex-secretary-of-war-patterson-laud-israels-achievements>, accessed 1 January 2015.
[2] Ibid.

Aside from Patterson's allusion to the shared predilections of the two nations toward war for the purposes of "freedom and independence," there were other messages put forth—ones that were well-aligned with those previously expressed by the orchestra's own press secretary's vision. Chief among those was the notion of the Israel Philharmonic as a vessel of universality and goodwill among its fellow nations. "Nearly all the speakers last night referred to the members of the orchestra as ambassadors," the *New York Times* noted the following day.[3] Appealing to Cold War sentiments by touting Israel as a possible arbiter between the East and West,[4] Felix Frankfurter echoed the sentiments expressed by Bernstein in his radio address, discussed in the previous chapter, that had elevated the spirituality of Israel to almost mythical proportions.

> Israel as a nation is not the resurrection of something that was dead, but the readaptation of something that had never died and always had lived… Externally and materially speaking, austerity prevails in Israel, but spiritually speaking, there is the most rich abundance in every domain of the mind and spirit… In no country is there such extensive, such all-inclusive response to the needs of the mind as in Israel.[5]

Without having played a note before the greater public, the Israel Philharmonic was already achieving some of its leadership's intended goals in the arena of public relations by relaying such sentiments in the presence of the American media.

The concerts, too, were a resounding success, each of them beginning with the joint playing of the American and Israeli national anthems. The positive reception was probably in no small part due to the involvement of Koussevitzky and Bernstein; the latter conducted most of the concerts. The orchestra itself received rave reviews, many of which were tinged with a palatable dash of relevant ideology. While it had to be

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[3] "Israeli Orchestra Is Welcomed Here," *New York Times*, 9 January 1951, 4.
[4] "Justice Frankfurter, Ex-secretary of War Patterson Laud Israel's Achievements."
[5] Ibid.

acknowledged that the ensemble was still experiencing growing pains, it seemed to matter very little in the final analysis. Speaking of the opening concert at Carnegie Hall, Olin Downes of the *New York Times* enthusiastically remarked:

> The occasion was very moving and one long to be remembered. The capacity of the hall had sold out far in advance of the occasion. The symphonic program was preceded by the playing of America's national anthem and the noble anthem of Israel, the lofty and inspired song, the Hatikvah, while the audience remained standing […]
>
> This is not to claim what would be untrue as well as superfluous: that the Israel Philharmonic is nearly equal today, in point of tone and technique, to the leading orchestras of America. The statement would be as unnecessary as it would be inaccurate. What we have here is an accomplished orchestra of ninety-five excellent musicians, capable of the admirably competent interpretation of the modern repertory, playing with an earnestness and feeling worthy of the culture and ideal for which is stands.
>
> This is the orchestra of a young nation, small in population and material resources, great in spirit and achievement…In this orchestra were men and women who had been branded in prison camps and had fought on Israel's battle front. They know what life and what music mean. Their playing was witness to that fact.[6]

Despite the heavily politicized discussion being generated by the orchestra's first appearances in North America, there were still those who were nonplussed by the heroic lore now being marketed alongside the Israel Philharmonic's concerts and who were willing to assess them purely on their merit as a musical ensemble. One of these was Virgil Thomson, by now a highly respected voice in American music criticism. Although he admitted that the orchestra possessed "a string body of unusual skill and power,"[7] he mused about the overall purpose of the tour:

> Hearing Koussevitzky (or Bernstein, either) can be a pleasure, even when the pieces played have little to offer that is fresh to the ear. But bringing a whole orchestra from Tel Aviv just to offer these artists in familiar repertory is surely

[6] Olin Downes, "Israel Orchestra Makes Debut Here," *New York Times*, 15 January 1951, 13.
[7] Virgil Thomson, "1951: Israel in America," in *Music Chronicles, 1940-1954* (New York: Library of America, No. 258, 16 October 2014).

> carrying perfume to Paris. Has Israel no confidence in its own conductors? Or its own music? Or in America's thirst for that which is new as well as of good report?
>
> Israel is news, and Israel is popular. Its orchestra, moreover, has the major element of a fine orchestra. It must also have a musical orientation, as any region of country does. When a French or British or Italian orchestra is heard in New York, its programs and its playing reflect musical attitudes different from ours. That is its chief contribution. The Israel Philharmonic, as here presented, offers nothing of the kind. Even its admirable strings, for all their warmth and sweetness, are not very different from those of our best orchestras. When we are given at the same time two of our own best conductors playing their own best pieces, we learn nothing about Israel save that its orchestra is a link in the international guest-conducting chain.[8]

There was, of course, a great deal of truth to Thomson's criticisms, and the open-ended queries raised in his review would continue to linger in the coming decades. Nonetheless, the Israel Philharmonic, in crossing an ocean to play standard canonical works under the batons of American conductors, had still taken an admirable first step in establishing itself on the international scene.[9] The next logical question—that of their primary musical identity as the foremost orchestra of the Jewish State—was still a long way from being answered.

* * *

As the close of the tour approached, Bernstein began to ponder his next career move. "I am giving up conducting next month for at least two years," Bernstein wrote to Aaron Copland that March, "and since my last date is in Mexico City, I shall probably remain there for some months, and write big, loud music for the American Theatre."[10] Above all else, Bernstein's ambitions were now set on composing an opera that would

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Works performed during the tour included Haydn's Symphony No. 88, Schumann's Symphony No. 2, and Brahms's Symphony No. 4. Please refer back to the close of Chapter Two for further program information.
[10] Leonard Bernstein to Aaron Copland, March 1951, as quoted in Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 205. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

secure an American composer's position among the canonical repertory, finishing what his long-held idol Gershwin had begun with *Porgy and Bess*. The work that would ultimately result from this period would be far less than that for which Bernstein might have hoped: the single-act *Trouble in Tahiti* (1952), a dark opera that tackled the subject of a stale marriage in the suburbs.[11] Despite featuring striking moments of brilliance in both the music and libretto, both written by the composer, the work would prove a flop, with critics largely focusing their attacks on the text.[12]

But Bernstein's sabbatical in Mexico was cut short as he rushed to the side of Koussevitzky, now reported as being close to death, to share in the Maestro's final moments of life. His beloved mentor died on 4 June 1951; a little more than three months later, Bernstein finally married his on-again-off-again fiancée, Felicia Montealegre, after which the pair returned to Mexico. Soon thereafter, Munio Mahler-Kalkstein cabled Bernstein in hopes that he would be willing to take over Koussevitzky's two-month engagement with the Israel Philharmonic in the spring of 1952, but Bernstein was firm: 1952 would be a year for composition.

Even as Mahler-Kalkstein continued to send Bernstein his best wishes concerning his temporary retirement from the conducting scene, he nonetheless continued to urge him toward making an exception for the Israel Philharmonic. "It is very fortunate that Felicia is so anxious to come to Israel,"[13] Mahler-Kalkstein half-joked in response to the apparent safety concerns of his new wife. "[That] means, at least, that you will have to

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[11] Writing for the *New York Times* following the premiere, Howard Taubman commented that with its lack of variety, superficiality, and insufficient characterizations, "[it] strikes one as a skillful study for a fine opera that Bernstein has yet to write." Howard Taubman, "Bernstein Opera Has its Premiere," *New York Times*, 14 June 1952, 12.

[12] A little over a decade later, Bernstein's final symphony, *Kaddish*, would meet similar criticism concerning its supposedly amateurish text, as will be described in the subsequent chapter.

[13] Munio Mahler-Kalkstein to Leonard Bernstein, 30 October 1951, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

come with her. So, good Lennie, as we are working on your 1952/53 schedule, it is a 'must' that you send us your period for Israel immediately."[14]

In truth, Israeli government officials hoped for more from Bernstein than just another conducting engagement. Koussevitzky had planned to serve as music director for a music festival in Jerusalem (occurring under the umbrella of a larger national fair): with his health failing, he had asked his protégé to take over, though Bernstein had refused to commit one way or another.[15] Now, the orchestra's administration hoped to persuade him; Bernstein's participation in the event would no doubt ensure an appearance with the orchestra. Not only were they attempting to entice Bernstein through Helen Coates with their intended plans to bring Darius Milhaud and the La Scala Opera on board, but they also wired Bernstein directly in Mexico in January 1952: "MAKING NOW FINAL ARRANGEMENTS SCHEDULE NEXT SEASON INSISTING RESERVE YOU OPENING FESTIVAL SPRING 1953 THEREFORE INVITING YOU FOR MARCH APRIL PLEASE DO NOT KEEP US WAITING AND CABLE CONSENT."[16]

Bernstein's ambivalent response reflects the pressure he must have felt to accept the appointment, likely stemming from both a sense of indebtedness to Koussevitzky and a desire not to let Israel down, despite his apparent intent to stick to his planned sabbatical: "PROBABLY YES BUT MUST WAIT A WHILE LONGER FOR DEFINITE ANSWER."[17] Koussevitzky's widow, too, was urging him to take her late husband's place. Bernstein had never liked disappointing the orchestra when he felt

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[14] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[15] Burton, 205-206.
[16] PALPHILORC to Leonard Bernstein, 1 January 1952, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[17] Leonard Bernstein to PALPHILORC, 21 January 1952, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

needed there; he must have liked even less the idea of rejecting the plea of his late mentor, who after all had asked Bernstein himself to take his place should he be too ill. Ultimately, the combined weight of their efforts was too much to resist. Bernstein agreed to direct the festival.

This was, however, far from his only commitment outside of composing: indeed, it was not even the only arts festival that Bernstein directed during his intended sabbatical. In 1952, he planned and led the inaugural Festival of the Creative Arts at Brandeis University, dedicating the event to Koussevitzky. In addition to heading their next arts festival in 1953, Bernstein was also at the height of his involvement with Brandeis; he was a visiting professor during this period, a post he was to hold until 1956. In part due to the growing relationship with his own sense of Judaism as he experienced it through his work in Israel, Bernstein—with his long-held interest in music pedagogy—now felt compelled to assist in the development of a music program at America's only non-sectarian higher learning institution with a mission to draw its inspiration from Jewish educational values. The subject of the Brandeis Festival as it relates to pertinent influences on Bernstein's Third Symphony, *Kaddish*, which would receive its premiere in Israel, will be explained at length in the next chapter.[18]

Even as the exact nature of Bernstein's role in the Jerusalem festival was still being defined, Tel Aviv was pressing Bernstein for a firm commitment in the upcoming season. At their urging to solidify dates, Helen Coates was candid in conveying Bernstein's position: " If Mr. Bernstein accepts the post as music director of the Festival, it does not seem likely that he could give a solid period of two months to the Israel

[18] For a detailed examination of Bernstein's activities at Brandeis, including the 1952 Festival of the Creative Arts, see Erica K. Argyropoulos, "Bernstein at Brandeis: A Study of Leonard Bernstein's Collaboration with Brandeis University, 1951-1955," M.A. Thesis, University of Kentucky, 2005.

Philharmonic," she explained.[19] She likewise reassured them that, dependent on how much time the orchestra could devote to the event, they would ultimately arrive at a resolution. Additionally, although Bernstein had apparently been informally offered—and had accepted—a primary role in the festival's development, Coates cautioned Lewey to keep the evolving details "strictly confidential" until an official agreement had been made with the Israeli government.[20]

Coates's plea for discretion had come too late. "We are sure the musical management of the Festival has been put into the hands of the only one suitable for this nomination," Lewey responded cordially.[21]

> We are still happier about this fact, as we know that the orchestra is one of the main beneficiaries of this appointment. Indeed, our satisfaction about the implied consequences was so great that we did not hesitate to tell everybody about it whom we thought to be interested.[22]

Although he conveyed the administration's attempt at damage control, the *faux pas* had already occurred, leaving Bernstein in a no doubt awkward predicament. But the situation surrounding the festival was once again to escalate further into the realm of mutual irritation between Bernstein and the orchestra. While continuing to push for Bernstein to commit himself to the upcoming season, Lewey advised Coates that their taking part in the musical events at the national festival was in no way yet a certainty. Nonetheless, Coates responded by repeating her inquiry as to what degree the orchestra might be willing to pledge its services: "Lenny would like to know very soon (in order to make his Festival program) how much time the Philharmonic can reserve for the Festival. Can you

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[19] Helen Coates to Wolfgang Lewey, 22 March 1952, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[20] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[21] Wolfgang Lewey to Helen Coates, 25 March 1952, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 3. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.
[22] Ibid. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

let us know about this question in the near future?"[23] She appealed to the understandable difficulties involved in coordinating plans between the orchestra and the festival, and admitted that Bernstein's decision regarding any possible conducting engagement with the Israel Philharmonic could not be definitely reached without further information on their part.

While he no doubt wanted to help the orchestra, Bernstein had reasonably hoped to do so by joining his obligations to both parties in a way that would allow him to serve the orchestra while still honoring the greater interests of the festival. The event, of course, would serve to bolster the larger artistic life of the country; most significantly, it was the festival that Koussevitzky had personally asked Bernstein to direct. At a time when the loss of this surrogate parent was no doubt weighing heavily on his mind, Bernstein was apparently not willing to spread himself too thinly, in which case he might risk letting everyone down. He decided to the draw his boundaries in a cable to Tel Aviv: "SINCE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY TO [FESTIVAL] DONT SEE HOW I CAN DO REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION SERIES ADVISE YOU ENGAGE ANOTHER CONDUCTOR THAT PERIOD LETTER FOLLOWS."[24]

The reaction from the orchestra's administration was one of outrage. Lewey stormed about the rumors that Bernstein would only act as an adviser during the festival yet had refused their invitation on that basis. In any case, he asserted, the fact that Bernstein would choose any event in favor of appearing with the Israel Philharmonic was a slight at which they were highly displeased; that Bernstein's tentatively affirmative

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[23] Helen Coates to Wolfgang Lewey, 14 April 1952, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

[24] Leonard Bernstein to PALPHILORC, 14 April 1952, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 5. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

response in January had now morphed into a firm no, he argued, was unacceptable. Lewey further railed about how the ordeal should be explained to the Israeli people, appealing to Bernstein's concern for his image.[25] Ultimately, Bernstein's role in the festival would prove far more limited than he had planned at this early date. Nonetheless, the lack of cooperation on the part of the orchestra's administration—and their anger at his intended role—exerted strain on the already problematic relationship between the two parties; Bernstein's continued contact with the orchestra concerning future appearances stagnated for several months.

Even still, Bernstein could not stay away for long. For two seasons, he had passed up invitations to Israel. Now, he would finally make his return, not only to participate in the festival, but also to open the 1953-54 season of the Israel Philharmonic. The decision to do so came at some degree of sacrifice for the conductor, who had to be convinced to cut short a tour of Latin America in order to arrive in time for his initial appearances in Tel Aviv. Bernstein was still enjoying the success of his latest Broadway hit, *Wonderful Town*, which had begun its run on Broadway in February 1953 and would go on to win five Tony Awards, including Best Musical; the project had been born out of his long-held friendship with Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Humorously, as may be recalled, Bernstein's father had once banished the flamboyant Green from his house. Indeed, as a fledging youth seeking to cut his ties to the traditionalist world represented by Sam and Harvard and find his place within the Jewish Broadway scene of New York to which Comden and Green belonged, it would have been difficult for Bernstein to imagine the heights to which he had now risen as he embarked upon yet another trip to the country in which he had long been revered as a musical hero.

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[25] Wolfgang Lewey to Leonard Bernstein, 17 April 1952, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2.

Bernstein arrived in Tel Aviv on 2 October 1953, after a punishing sixty-hour flight via El Al from Rio de Janeiro; his wife Felicia joined him five days later, marking her first trip to Israel. "We left our one-year old [daughter] Jamie in New York in the care of a wonderful nurse from Israel," Bernstein exclaimed, courting the eager press upon his arrival.[26] When asked for comment on his latest Broadway success, Bernstein gave a self-congratulatory nod toward his own altruism: "I need the money, as lately I have mainly been conducting orchestras which have no large funds at their disposal."[27] Although, according to Humphrey Burton, Felicia was reportedly not very enthusiastic about her first journey to Israel, she nonetheless was moved by the public's reaction to her husband, as reflected in a letter to Coates near the end of their trip: "The concerts have been brilliant. Lenny's name is magic everywhere. I never saw such a thing. It's really very touching."[28]

Bernstein opened the Israel Philharmonic concert season on 6 October 1953 with a program consisting of David Diamond's *Rounds for String Orchestra*, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 17 (conducted from the piano), and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5. Declaring Diamond's work as a "mastery of form" and Bernstein's rendition of Mozart as "introverted and highly personal…Technically…of superb refinement,"[29] *Jerusalem Post* critic Mo reserved his most enthusiastic praise for their rendition of Prokofiev: "He could not have found a better interpreter than Bernstein, and a more responsive orchestra than the I.P.O.," he remarked, later paying homage to the conductor's departed mentor. "Koussevitzky's interpretation was more spectacular: it had the *furore* which an old man

[26] "Bernstein to Give 22 Concerts," *Jerusalem Post*, 6 October 1953, 3.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Felicia Bernstein to Helen Coates, October 1953, as quoted in Burton, 232.
[29] Mo, "Musical Diary," *Jerusalem Post*, 11 October 1953, 4.

has at his disposal—but Bernstein brought out the many aspects of resignation with a novel and most convincing lucidity."[30]

Another notable program during the 1953 trip centered around the Conquest of the Desert, the event that in its planning stages had proved a source of contention for Bernstein and the orchestra administrators. Rather than the "festival" Bernstein had described, it would more aptly be termed an international exhibition, held from 22 September to 14 October: an early attempt by the Israeli government to showcase the intellectual prowess of the Jewish state before the world. On that front, it proved a massive flop. The United States, France, and Britain, among other nations, boycotted the crudely-titled fair in protest of Israel's claiming of Jerusalem as her capital in violation of international law.[31] Nonetheless, the would-be world's fair drew nearly 600,000 spectators over the course of its run, or approximately half the Israeli population.[32]

Performing before a crowd of three thousand people, Bernstein led the orchestra in the world premiere of Israeli composer Odeon Partos's symphonic fantasy *Ein Gev*, Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major (conducted from the piano), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. Although Franz Goldstein did not spare his usual praise for Bernstein's "sublime" performance of the Ravel concerto, which he contended "might have been written for him,"[33] he was far more reserved in his assessment of the other two works. In the case of *Ein Gev*, he complained that "one could not help feeling that [Partos] was following too closely in the steps of his master, Bela Bartok [*sic*]," and therefore "missed the cogent urgency of inspiration." In the case of Beethoven's Fifth, on the other hand,

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[30] Ibid.
[31] "Jerusalem Fair Ends," *New York Times*, 15 October 1953, 6.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Franz Goldstein, "Musical Diary," *Jerusalem Post*, 14 October 1953, 4.

Goldstein "felt that a few additional rehearsals would not have come amiss." On the whole, he mused that the program "appeared to have been compiled rather haphazardly."[34] This edition of "Musical Diary" perhaps represented Goldstein's most tepid review of a concert led by Bernstein.

Also significant among Bernstein's appearances in Israel in 1954 were his final concerts in Haifa and Tel Aviv, in which he presented a special program dedicated especially to Koussevitzky. The ambitious lineup included the Israeli premiere of the *Adagio* from Mahler's unfinished Symphony No. 10, another hearing of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major with Bernstein at the piano, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, *Eroica.* Even by Mahlerian standards, the *Adagio* is angst-ridden, deeply expressive, and harmonically bold; throughout the sixteen-measure monophonic andante section that comprises the work's introduction, somberly carried by the violas, there is no clear linear gesture indicative of the diatonic key of F#. The harmonic ambiguities presented by the work point to an influence representing a highly controversial figure in Israel. Seizing upon the moment, the press fanned the early embers of a lively, highly contentious debate that still continues to rage to date:

> The performance was unsurpassable in beauty and seriousness. However, the work also gave rise to some reflections: more than any other of Mahler's works the adagio from the Tenth Symphony is saturated with Wagner's musical world (especially the "Tristan") and the present ban on the works of Wagner appears as an intolerable misrepresentation of the functions of cultural education.[35]

To be sure, the ongoing Wagner ban in Israel represented a controversy in which Bernstein held strong and clear opinions. In 1981, he would express his position as such to the general secretary of the orchestra, Avi Shoshani:

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Mo., "Tel Aviv," *Jerusalem Post*, 4 November 1953, 4.

> The music of Wagner stands at the center of the symphonic repertoire. If the Israel Orchestra is to grow into a truely [*sic*] world class instrument, it must finally embrace Wagner, since all great orchestral thinking of the last 100 years—that is, Mahler, Bruckner, Schoenberg, Debussy, Berg, Scriabin, and so many more—has developed out of the great musical centerpiece which is Tristan and Isolde.
>
> My heart is with you, all of you, whether you agree or not, and I pray for the continuation of peace and the democratic spirit in Israel, the great model of democracy in the Middle East.[36]

In willing "the continuation of peace and the democratic spirit," Bernstein must have imagined the possibility of the opposite: a land in which freedoms could potentially be suspended in favor of political expediency. Curiously, Bernstein would later become engaged in writing and producing films about both Mahler and Wagner—intended for consumption in Israel, according to the *Jerusalem Post*—in the mid-1980s.[37] While he would not reveal to the press whether his Wagner film was made in support of lifting the ban, he hinted at its significance for the Israel viewing audience: "As I wrote and filmed it, I more and more felt that I was talking to you—not the Jews in general but the people of Israel specifically."[38] One can surmise from the private correspondence cited above that this was indeed his primary motive. Although Bernstein never finished the film, an editorial published posthumously by the *New York Times* in 1991 revealed some of the sentiments he might have expressed: "I don't believe there can be such a thing as 'racist music'…Wagner is long dead and buried, as is the Third Reich, but we music lovers are alive and hungry for great music. And if Wagner wrote great music, as I think he did, why should we not embrace it fully and be nourished by it?"[39]

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[36] Leonard Bernstein to Avi Shoshani, 17 October 1981, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 93, Folder 34. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[37] Mark Segal, "Maestro Lenny," *Jerusalem Post*, 23 August 1985, 8. Bernstein's Mahler documentary was eventually released under the following title: *Leonard Bernstein: The Little Drummer Boy*, Kultur Video, 1995.
[38] Lea Levavi, "Bernstein: Mahler's 'Ninth' Most Jewish Piece," *Jerusalem Post*, 20 August 1985.
[39] Leonard Bernstein, "Wagner's Music Isn't Racist," *New York Times*, 26 December 1991, A25.

Following the close of the 1953 trip to Israel, Bernstein was once again engrossed in his work as a composer; during 1954 and 1955, he completed his critically-acclaimed score to the film *On the Waterfront* (1954), and undertook serious work on his operetta *Candide* (1956). The Israel Philharmonic, meanwhile, hoped to have him back. On 15 June 1954, they cabled to inform him of their plans for a wide-scale European tour beginning in May 1955. They implored him to participate, as well as to return to Israel early in the year for a period of three weeks to help them prepare.[40] Bernstein penned his intended reply on the back of the telegram as follows: "Absolutely impossible accept Israel tour since I was asked so late. I have already fully committed—sincere regrets."[41] Bernstein, however, would apparently offer a compromise. In the midst of the other obligations posed by his four-month stay in Italy in 1955, he would find the time to break away for a week and join the Israel Philharmonic for a portion of the Italian leg of their tour. It was a remarkable gesture of his continued dedication to the orchestra, even as his own star continued to rise and his list of commitments grew exhausting.

In March of 1955, at the fresh-faced age of 36, Bernstein became the first American to conduct at the historic Teatro alla Scala in Milan, where he worked with Maria Callas and conducted two masterworks of nineteenth-century opera, Bellini's *La Sonnambula* (1831) and Puccini's *La Bohème* (1895). Meanwhile, in America, Isaac Stern and the Boston Symphony premiered Bernstein's *Serenade after Plato's Symposium* under the baton of Charles Munch on 15 April; four days later, *Trouble in Tahiti* opened on Broadway for a modest run of forty-seven performances. Bernstein was indeed riding high when on 25 May, he met the Israel Philharmonic—and Isaac Stern—in

[40] Itzhak Norman to Leonard Bernstein, 15 June 1954, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 6.
[41] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Genoa for the start of their Italian tour. In total, Bernstein conducted seven concerts in Milan, Naples, Florence, Perugia, and Genoa; the program included Brahms's *Tragic Overture*, op. 81, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, and his own *Serenade*, with Stern again assuming the role of violin soloist. Ultimately, Bernstein was pleased with their efforts, as reflected in a letter he penned to Felicia after the initial concert in Genoa:

> [It] was a job teaching them the Serenade and the Berlioz, neither of which they knew, and at a time when they were so tired they could barely read the notes…and then there was the concert, and the report is that never before has Genoa seen such success. Imagine, with my funny modern music and unpopular Berlioz! I had feared for the size of the audience as well as for their applause, and was surprised delightfully on both counts. The papers are raves, and Isaac played better than ever, and the orchestra really did miracles, everything considered…[42]

Several months after the Italian engagement, the Israel Philharmonic was eagerly looking toward Bernstein's next potential engagement with the orchestra. "We are still talking about the wonderful days we had with you on the tour, and we can tell you that the public here was envious of the Italians who were able to hear you with the Orchestra," wrote K. Salomon, the new General Secretary.

> This brings us to the point of the letter. When will it be possible for you to return to us in Israel? We are now making plans for the 1956/57 season and would be more than delighted if you could come over and open this staying with us for about six weeks.[43]

Bernstein, as it turns out, was completely engrossed in compositional projects—specifically, *Candide* and *West Side Story*—as Coates was to explain to Salomon:

> It may be possible in the spring of 1957, but he cannot know definitely until January 1st at the earliest. He is writing a new musical for the theatre, and they hope for a production of this work in the coming spring (1956). If it is not ready at

[42] Leonard Bernstein to Felicia Bernstein, 27 May 1955, as quoted in Burton, 247. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[43] K. Salomon to Leonard Bernstein, 20 October 1955, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

> that time, it will have to be put off until the spring of 1957, since the summer will be taken up with the production of Mr. B's musical version of CANDIDE.[44]

Attempting to come to a compromise, the orchestra leadership tried to convince Bernstein to lead the December 1956 Jubilee Festival taking place in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the orchestra's creation. "This Festival will be, we hope, an outstanding event, not only for Israel but also for the whole world, and Mr. Bernstein will lead us in this endeavor," Salomon projected ambitiously. "We sincerely hope that he will not disappoint us and his many friends and admirers over here who have been waiting for him to come back for a long time now."[45]

Bernstein, however, would not budge, still holding to his original offer to potentially join the orchestra in 1957. Salomon, too, was forced to look toward the future:

> The latest news of you has been from the last Time Magazine in which there was such an interesting article on your tremendously successful television appearances. This is only a small consolation for us. We want you here…However, we definitely count on your visit in the Spring of 1957 and trust that you will not be detained again.[46]

Although Bernstein still hoped to return sometime after the middle part of the year, plans concerning his upcoming Broadway production, *West Side Story*, had taken precedence. "The Broadway show, which Bernstein is now writing with Arthur Laurents and Jerome Robbins, will not be produced until the later winter or early spring of 1957," Coates advised Salomon. "Mr. Bernstein had hoped it would go into production this spring, and

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[44] Ibid.
[45] K. Salomon to Helen Coates, 26 December 1955, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[46] K. Salomon to Leonard Bernstein 9 January 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

then he would be free to go abroad in the spring of 1957. If the show opens in April of 1957, Mr. Bernstein could then go to Israel and Europe in May…"[47]

There were exciting developments not just in Bernstein's life, but in that of the orchestra. In the spring of 1956, Henry Haftel was again in the United States, this time on behalf of the committee charged with finalizing building plans for the Frederic R. Mann Auditorium, the Israel Philharmonic's much-anticipated concert hall. In bringing this to Coates's attention, the orchestra once again pressed Bernstein to commit: "It is now three seasons since his last visit and we all think it is high time he came back!"[48]

Ultimately, Bernstein signed a contract to rejoin the orchestra in October for the opening of the auditorium. This legally binding agreement was to become yet another source of contention, as Bernstein found he had been slated to assume the co-conductorship of the New York Philharmonic on 15 October 1957. After an informal discussion with Frederic R. Mann, the wealthy American industrialist bankrolling the construction of the hall, Bernstein cavalierly assumed he would be released from his obligation, with Mann's confirmed agreement.[49] He was wrong. The Israel Philharmonic board was not prepared to be as generous on such a significant occasion. In a telegram to Bernstein, orchestra officials were quick to dismiss his misimpression that Mann had the authority to release the conductor from his contract; they cited not only the agreement but also Bernstein's own apparent appeal that he should be the one to open the hall as reasons

[47] Helen Coates to K. Salomon, 24 January 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7.
[48] Henry Haftel to Helen Coates, 11 May 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.
[49] Helen Coates to K. Salomon, 28 November 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7.

why his failure to appear would have to be treated as a breach of contract.[50] The telegram, then, was a thinly veiled warning: if Bernstein refused to appear this time, there would be legal consequences.

Knowing that he had no choice but to negotiate an alternative solution, Bernstein attempted to persuade the orchestra to change the dates of his engagement, citing reports from Mann and others that constructions efforts were, in any case, running behind schedule.[51] He offered alternative suggestions, appealing to the difficulty of his situation, but in the end, the orchestra was unwilling to budge: the entire season had already been scheduled in entirety, and nothing more could be done. Bernstein would have to work around his existing obligations to lead the auditorium's inaugural concert. Additionally, he would have to navigate the schedule of events surrounding the opening of *West Side Story*.

Meanwhile, the orchestra labored to escape the impact of the latest tensions in the region, stemming from Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, and culminating in the 1956 Israeli invasion of the Sinai Peninsula. Even as Bernstein feverishly attempted to renegotiate the terms of his contract, he expressed his concern in light of these developments: "I hope that conditions in Israel are not so grim as they seem in our newspapers, and that there will always be time and energy for the growth of music in your country."[52]

In spite of his unwillingness to release Bernstein from his contract, Salomon was cordial in congratulating Bernstein on his new position at the New York Philharmonic

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[50] PALPHILORC to Leonard Bernstein, 6 December 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7.
[51] Leonard Bernstein to K. Salomon, 16 October 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7.
[52] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

and conveyed his apologies for the orchestra's inability to assist him in light of their already set schedule; further, he updated Bernstein on the unfolding crisis in Israel and its impact on the orchestra:

> At this writing, life has more or less resumed its course here and newspaper reports must have kept you informed of what transpired. Our guest artists, Zino Francescatti and the Italian conductor, Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, behaved in a really remarkable manner which the whole country has appreciated. They literally insisted on staying on, saying "as long as audiences came to hear them, they were prepared to make music for them." We put it to them quite frankly that they were free to leave if they so desired but they preferred to show their sympathy and goodwill by staying. In this way they enabled us to continue our normal concert life which was the best way of helping maintain morale. They traveled round the country with the I.P.O.—as did pianist Maryan Filar who likewise stayed to fulfil [*sic*] his contract—and all the concerts duly took place, even in outlying districts although in certain cases, due to the situation, we knew the financial results would not be satisfactory. But we felt that the Orchestra's role was to try and keep life going as usual and the wonderful response accorded the guest artists and the performances showed that our attitude was the correct one.[53]

In February, the orchestra followed up with this warm telegram:

> OUR MR HAFTEL GAVE TODAY HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE REPORT PRESS CONFERENCE YOUR WONDERFUL ATTITUDE OUR COUNTRY AND ORCHESTRA STOP EVERYBODY MOST GRATEFUL REGARDS FROM WHOLE ORCHESTRA PRESS AND JISHUW LOVE PALPHILORC.[54]

In spite of the contract debacle, Bernstein and the orchestra sorted out their differences relatively quickly and with little malice. Both parties were now focused on one common goal: the opening of the Israel Philharmonic's new home, an initiative toward which both Bernstein and the orchestra's administrators had long strived.

Bernstein achieved an entirely different form of restitution with the public in light of his eagerness to skirt the precise terms of his contract. In the Israeli press, his

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[53] K. Salomon to Leonard Bernstein, 8 November 1956, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

[54] PALPHILORC to Leonard Bernstein, 1 February 1957, Library of Congress, Amberson Business Papers, Box 1001, Folder 7. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Here, *jishuw* is an alternate English transliteration of *yishuv* (ישוב), which refers to those Jewish settlers who resided in Palestine prior to the formation of the State of Israel.

attempt at postponing his visit to open the hall due to his new position at the New York Philharmonic was not only ignored, it was obliterated in favor of a far more appealing spin on the events:

> Although Mr. Leonard Bernstein was urged by the Board of the New York Philharmonic, in which he and Mitropoulos have recently been appointed music directors, to open the New York season, the conductor-composer-pianist insisted on keeping his commitment to conduct the Gala I.P.O. concert with which the Frederic R. Mann Auditorium will be opened on October 2.[55]

Thus, a conflict of interests in which Bernstein had attempted to extricate himself in favor of his interests in America ultimately served as a podium upon which to hoist him before the Israeli public, who had long since come to view him as a national hero. However much he became engrossed in new compositional projects and his conducting obligations, and however unofficial was his title, Bernstein was—and would remain—America's musical ambassador to Israel. This was an image he carried not only in the Israeli press, but also in the United States media, which issued a steady flow of updates on the composer's activities in Israel.[56]

The true nature of Bernstein's trip to Israel, however, was dramatic enough in itself: *West Side Story* opened in New York on 26 September 1957; only one day later, he and Felicia were on their way to Tel Aviv.[57] As Bernstein prepared for his first rehearsal in the Mann Auditorium the following day, the American press broke from the endless stream of reviews of the show to comment on the developments there. "The Israel

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[55] "I.P.O. Festivities," *Jerusalem Post*, 20 February 1957, 4.

[56] Before the opening of the hall, the *New York Times* had been reporting on Bernstein's historic appearances in Israel since the early years of his travels there. The following are two examples which highlight the positive publicity as reflected by sensationalized headlines: "Bernstein in Beersheba: Israeli Soldiers Jam Biblical City to Hear Piano Concerto," *New York Times*, 21 November 1948, 90. Peter Gradenwitz, "Bernstein in Israel: Conductor and Orchestra Tour Despite Hazards," *New York Times*, 28 November 1948.

[57] Bernstein, in fact, would not take part in the recording sessions that yielded the *West Side Story* original Broadway cast album, as they occurred during his trip to Israel to inaugurate the hall.

Philharmonic Orchestra will perform in its own concert hall this year after two decades of playing in fair pavilions, movie theatres, recreations halls and playhouses," proclaimed Moshe Brillant of the *New York Times* in dramatic fashion.[58]

Having received his information directly from Henry Haftel, the Israel Philharmonic's long-time American liaison, Brillant described how Mann had helped make good on the hall, using his status as leader of the Israel bond campaign to fundraise and procure loans, in addition to donating $250,000 of his own money to the venture.[59] Incidentally, Bernstein had also lent a hand in promoting Israeli bond investments by capitalizing on the press surrounding his latest Broadway show, propping it up to Israel's advantage. "Everyone's coming, my dear, even Nixon and 35 admirals. Senators abounding, and big Washington-hostessy type party afterwards in Lenuhtt's honor," Bernstein wrote to Felicia of the star-studded gala surrounding the Washington, DC premiere of *West Side Story* that August. "Then next Sunday, which is my birthday, there is a Jewish version—a big party for me, but admission is one Israel bond. All helps the show. We have a 75 thou. advance, and the town is buzzing. Not bad. I have high hopes."[60]

With the help of Mann and Bernstein, the hall's debut concert promised to be equally successful. Brillant described the aesthetic and acoustic makeup of the structure:

> The facade of the concert hall is marble and glass, and the auditorium is fan-shaped, spreading outward and upward from the low-lying stage. Even the balcony is blended into the pattern. At each side of the hall, the balcony starts level with the orchestra floor and rises toward the gallery in the back. The horseshoe-shaped balcony does not overhang the orchestra floor at all.

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[58] Moshe Brillant, "New Concert Hall for Tel Aviv," *New York Times*, 29 September 1957, 125.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Leonard Bernstein to Felicia Bernstein, 13 August 1957, as quoted in Burton, 272. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

> To create the acoustic effect achieved in old-style halls by plastic reliefs, sculptures and wall figures, the architects varied the patterns, designs, and angles of the ashwood walls, [co-architect Zeev Rechter] explained. The ceiling is suspended from a copper-domed roof. Most of the ceiling is non-reflective plywood louver, but the section over the orchestra floor is asbestos sheeting suspended at slants as a sound reflector.
>
> Mr. Haftel said that in the new hall musicians would at last be able to hear the sonority of the sounds they are producing, and would not have to rely solely on the beat of the conductor.[61]

Previously, the Israel Philharmonic's struggle had not only been its own inability to hear its fellow members, but also the public's inability to experience the orchestra as a cohesive sonorous body, due to the acoustically inappropriate venues in which the ensemble had been forced to perform. Additionally, the enhanced capacity of the Mann Auditorium, which seated 2,700 and could accommodate an additional three-hundred in its standing space, allowed the orchestra much-needed latitude that had previously been unthinkable. Because they had played in such small venues, the Israel Philharmonic was forced to repeat each program up to thirteen times to accommodate all of its subscribers. Now, the orchestra would be free to mount more programs and visit hitherto unseen communities in the time they would save from fewer repetitions of the same repertoire.[62]

On 30 September 1957, Leonard and Felicia arrived in Tel Aviv; they had been delayed one day by mechanical difficulties with their plane and were forced to spend a night in Athens along the way. That evening, Bernstein led the first full rehearsal in the hall. "The famous musician raised his baton to start on the first notes of Noam Sheriff's prize-winning 'Festival Prelude' while technicians and workmen were still making frenzied last minute preparations to complete the hall in time for Wednesday's gala

[61] "New Concert Hall for Tel Aviv."
[62] Ibid.

opening," reported the *Jerusalem Post*.[63] As Bernstein had suspected when he appealed to the orchestra leadership to postpone the opening of the hall to accommodate his new position at the New York Philharmonic, construction had apparently fallen well behind schedule, and its completion was now down to the wire.

Perhaps more interesting, however, was the description of Bernstein taking to the podium with raised baton—interesting, of course, because the conductor had avoided the use of a baton since the start of his conducting career. "After being presented with a baton made of local olive wood," Humphrey Burton reveals, "he departed from his customary baton-less style at the inaugural concert on October 2 and used his gift to conduct the chorus, orchestra and audience in the national anthem."[64] At these earlier rehearsals, it seems, Bernstein was already experimenting with the instrument, which was ceremonially bequeathed to him by the Mayor of Tel Aviv, Haim Levanon, at the start of the concert. Perhaps Bernstein was trying the baton on for size to discern whether or not he wished to use it for the entirety of the concert. Either way, the gift proves a curious side note to this particular trip to Israel, for after injuring his back during the trip, he found that the use of the baton helped to restrict his movements and thus used it during a number of his Israeli concerts.[65] Ultimately, the instrument was to become a fixture in Bernstein's conducting approach.

The dedication of the Frederic R. Mann Auditorium proved to be far more than the inauguration of a concert hall; rather, it was a diplomatic triumph for Israel and the United States. The venue had been build with the support of American organizations, largely at the behest of an American businessman, and was to be opened with a gala

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[63] "Bernstein Conducts First Full Rehearsal in New Auditorium," *Jerusalem Post*, 30 September 1957, 3.
[64] Burton, 281.
[65] Ibid., 282.

concert event led by the first American-born conductor ever to rise to prominence. To celebrate the event, 100 prominent American citizens were ushered from New York to Tel Aviv on the invitation of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to attend the festivities.[66] And, although it angered Israeli Conservatives, Ben-Gurion even insisted that the performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" precede the ritual playing of "Hatikvah."[67] Switching between Hebrew and English in his remarks, he gave a riveting speech on the common values shared between the nations of Israel and the United States, designating the hall as "a symbol of international cooperation, and in particular of Israeli-American friendship."[68] The front-page headline of the *Jerusalem Post* echoed the Prime Minister's sentiments: "Music and Israel-U.S. Amity As I.P.O. Concert Hall Opens."

To an audience of 3,000, Bernstein opened the program with Beethoven's *Consecration of the House Overture*, followed by Israeli composer Noam Sheriff's *Festival Prelude*, written especially for the occasion; Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, op. 64, with Isaac Stern as soloist; Ernest Bloch's *Shelomo: Hebrew Rhapsody for Cello and Orchestra*, with Paul Tortelier performing solo cello; and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, with Arthur Rubinstein serving as soloist. This was an impressive roster by any standards, but the venue itself generated the most fervor. "The acoustics in the new hall made it possible for the Israelis to hear the music such as they never heard it in the playhouses, movie theatres or clubrooms in which the orchestra performed for the last twenty years," proclaimed the *New York Times*.[69] Today, the Mann Auditorium is still the home of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and in attending a concert there, one still

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[66] "Israeli Concert Oct. 2: Philharmonic's New Home in Tel Aviv to Be Dedicated," *New York Times*, 17 September 1957, 38.
[67] Burton, 281-282.
[68] "Music and Israel-U.S. Amity As I.P.O. Concert Hall Opens," *Jerusalem Post,* 3 October 1957, 1.
[69] "Music Hall Opens in Tel Aviv Gala," *New York Times*, 3 October 1957, 26.

encounters more than a trace of the organization's continued attachment to Bernstein, for upon each program is printed "Leonard Bernstein, Laureate Conductor."

Considering the demands of his schedule, that Bernstein should lead a total of eighteen concerts in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa during his 1957 trip was no small feat, and further proof of his unwavering dedication to the growing nation. The following year, Bernstein would assume the post of music director of the New York Philharmonic, a position he held for the next eleven years. In spite of his growing stature—and the tightening constraints of his schedule—Bernstein returned to Israel three times during his tenure with the New York Philharmonic. Following the 1957 trip, Bernstein took his longest hiatus from Israel yet; it would be five long years before he returned. But this time, he brought with him something quite extraordinary: his third and final symphony, *Kaddish,* to be unveiled before the world for the first time by none other than the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Chapter Four: Saying *Kaddish*

"Bernstein's 'libretto' is as replete with Jewish tradition as any text could be. Although all of the imagery derives from the Bible (and is thus accessible to all, albeit in its 'Old Testament' form), the speaker's identity and passions are driven by Jewish history and philosophy, and the Kaddish itself is a uniquely Jewish text. Yet there is not a lot of 'Jewish' music anywhere in the symphony. Indeed, in this composition, Bernstein…[explores] the possibility of 12-tone music, a major leap outside the boundaries of…Jewish tradition."

- Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (2007)

Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*, has come to epitomize the composer's musical commitment to his Jewishness. The Milken Archive of American Jewish Music commented: "Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish* has probably introduced more members of the general public to Jewish liturgy in its original language than any other musical work."[1] While there are no allusions to Jewish liturgical or vernacular music, as appear in other well-known "Jewish" symphonic works,[2] *Kaddish* is Jewish in its text, Jewish in its dialogistic argument with God—a familiar theme that has pervaded Jewish history since the days of Abraham, emphasized in Hasidic philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and Jewish in its underlying themes, derivations, and influences. The dodecaphonic music, however, is the product of modernism.

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[1] "Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish*," The Milken Archive for American Jewish Music, <http://www.milkenarchive.org/articles/articles.taf?function=detail&ID=9>, accessed 2 October 2014.

[2] One famous example of a symphony containing allusions to Jewish music (in this case, *klezmer*), is the B section of the third movement of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1. Bernstein deeply identified with Mahler on a personal and musical level, and regarded him as one of the most important Jewish composers, in spite of his decision—likely born of pragmatism—to convert. In a subsequent conversation with music critic and friend Ferdinand Pfohl, Mahler would liken his conversion to changing his cloak. Jonathan Carr, *Mahler: A Biography* (New York: Overlook Press, 1999), 84.

And yet, *Kaddish* stands among Bernstein's most controversial works.[3] American critics characterized it as banal and overly theatrical; its earliest performers and narrators lackluster; its text blasphemous, offensive, and sophomoric. *Kaddish*, however, has slowly garnered acceptance and respect among the American Jewish community, as well as broader audiences both at home and abroad, and is beginning to enjoy occasional performances by orchestras across the world.[4]

Indeed, it is difficult to listen to the *Kaddish* from beginning to end without feeling some sense of sadness or even unease. The text and music are at times discomforting, and have presented an enigma to music and cultural scholars alike, even as they represent a sort of catharsis to those Jews who identified with the work's larger message. The self-authored text appears to embody Bernstein's deep awareness of his own otherness: not only born of his Jewishness, but also the populist occupational endeavors that stood between him and the intellectual establishment. Ultimately, the symphony unfolds as a musical narrative of an American Jew questioning the atrocities of a genocide that claimed many of his own relatives. On still other levels, the text has also been interpreted as a reflection of Bernstein's own struggles with his faith, his sexuality, and his turbulent relationship with both his higher power and his own father. Regardless of one's assessment of the work's inherent value or acceptance into the

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[3] Other controversial Bernstein works include *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers* (1971), in which the composer draws a divide between the hypocritical religious establishment and spiritual belief, and *A Quiet Place* (1983), Bernstein's only full length opera, in which he tackles themes such as homosexuality and incest.

[4] Orchestras in Israel and Germany, where the work enjoyed far more favorable critical reception, have regularly performed the work since its debut in 1963, and continue to perform it frequently today. In the past ten years, the symphony has been performed at least seventy-nine times across the world (with the majority of those concerts being in Germany), including by the National Symphony in 2005 and 2011, the Philadelphia Orchestra and Tokyo Philharmonic in 2008, the Dresden Philharmonic in 2009, the Israel Philharmonic in 2005 and 2009, the Czech Philharmonic and Baltimore Symphony in 2012, the Ausburg Symphony and Berlin Concert House Orchestra in 2013, and the Portland Symphony and Royal National Scottish Orchestra in 2014. Boosey and Hawkes Performance Database, <http://www.boosey.com/cr/calendar/perf_search.asp>, accessed 16 February 2015.

orchestral canon, the musical, spiritual, and autobiographical questions raised by this complex and controversial work are significant, forever intertwined with the narrative of Bernstein's relationship with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra; indeed, the ensemble continued to champion the work long before it was re-examined and accepted into the orchestral repertoire.[5]

From Inception to Israel: The History of Bernstein's *Kaddish*

The history of *Kaddish* begins in 1955, when the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the Boston Symphony Orchestra commissioned Bernstein to compose a symphonic work in 1956 to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the orchestra (founded in 1881), and also to honor Koussevitzky and Charles Munch, who inherited the post from the former in 1949 and held it until 1962. Munch had planned to conduct the world premiere upon his first return visit as guest conductor in Boston, but ultimately Bernstein shelved the project for a number of years before it finally gained traction.

According to Humphrey Burton, Bernstein had already begun to conceive of *Kaddish* as early as August of 1961, when he paid tribute to his father, Samuel at his seventieth birthday party:

> What is a father in the eyes of a child? The child feels: My father is first of all my Authority, with power to dispense approval or punishment. He is secondly my Protector; thirdly my Provider; beyond that he is Healer, Comforter, Law-giver, because he caused me to exist. And as the child grows up he retains all his life, in some deep, deep part of him, the stamp of that father-image whenever he thinks of God, of good and evil, of retribution. For example, take the idea of defiance. Every son, at one point or other defies his father, fights him, departs from him, only to return to him—if he is lucky— closer and more secure than before. Again

[5] Just since 2005, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra has performed the work seven times. Boosey and Hawkes Performance Database.

> we see clearly the parallel with God: Moses protesting to God, arguing, fighting to change God's mind. So the child defies the father and something of that defiance also remains throughout his life.[6]

Indeed, the words do seem to prophesize the themes that would become central to the symphony: expressing defiance in an argument with God, as well as the idea of departure and eventual return to God, as expressed in the symphony's text.

By early 1963, Bernstein's conception of the work had solidified, and he sought permission from the Boston Symphony to conduct the world premiere in Tel Aviv prior to Munch's American debut, as he believed Israel to be the most symbolically appropriate venue. Helen Coates wrote to Israel Philharmonic manager Abe Cohen on 5 February 1963 to convey Bernstein's intentions: "The delay in sending you Mr. Bernstein's program suggestions is due to his desire to perform a work he is now composing," she explained.[7] With the Boston Symphony's approval, Coates added, Bernstein hoped to hold the world premiere in Israel in December 1963—should he finish during the upcoming summer, as planned. She revealed that the work was based on the *Kaddish*, and indicated that although the length was yet unknown, it would be scored for orchestra, narrator, chorus, and one or more soloists.

However, it was not until 1963 that Bernstein made the firm decision to proceed with the symphony after some initial setbacks, and also to write the text, as expressed in a letter to his sister Shirley on 10 August 1963:

> On August 1st, I made the great decision to go forward with Kaddish, to try and finish it, score it, rehearse, prepare, revise, translate into Hebrew...It's a monstrous task: I've been copying it out legibly for the copyists, night and day and now it's ready, except for a rather copious finale that remains to be written…I'm terribly

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[6] Leonard Bernstein, "Tribute to S.J.B.," in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 173-174. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[7] Helen Coates to Abe Cohen, 5 February 1963, Israel Philharmonic Archives, Binder 2. Courtesy of the Israel Philharmonic Archives.

> excited about the new piece, even about the Speaker's text, which I finally decided has to be done by me. Collaboration with a poet is impossible on so personal a work, so I've found after a distressful year of trying with [Robert] Lowell and [Frederick] Seidel; so I'm elected, poet or no poet. But the reactions of various people to whom I've read it have been so moving (and moved) that I was encouraged to keep at it. I think you'll be surprised by its power.[8]

Like other large-scale Bernstein works, such as *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers* (1971), *Kaddish* remained on the back burner for years before it was feverishly completed under the pressure of a rapidly approaching deadline. According to his daughter Jamie's account to Humphrey Burton, Bernstein emerged from his composition studio waving the manuscript in the air and screaming: "I've finished it, I've finished it!" His wife was so elated she subsequently jumped into the swimming pool fully clothed.[9] Indeed, this must not have been a work that came quickly and easily to Bernstein, as was the case for his Broadway hit *Wonderful Town* a decade before.

Despite Bernstein's timely completion of the symphony, the composer harbored doubts about the reception it would ultimately enjoy. As a composition that berates God for allowing so much evil to persist in the world unchecked, the assassination of John F. Kennedy—gunned down in broad daylight on a Dallas street—shed new unintended light on the speaker's rage as expressed through the text, and Bernstein feared it would invite a controversial interpretation. He wrote to Abe Cohen on September 23 to express his concern "that this text may excite some controversy or problem with the Israeli public."[10] Cohen, however, did not think the Israeli populace could be roused so easily. "[This]

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[8] Leonard Bernstein to Shirley Bernstein, 10 August 1953, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Personal Papers, File 61. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[9] Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 337.
[10] Leonard Bernstein to Abe Cohen, 23 September 1963, as quoted in Burton, 338. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

recitation can be made without hesitation whatsoever," Cohen said.[11] As it turns out he was correct. It is interesting that at this early juncture, Cohen was completely unconcerned with how the text would be perceived, considering the outrage it later provoked in the United States. This is significant, for as will be explained, the Israel public was prepared to understand the work in a way that Bernstein's own compatriots were unable or unwilling to do.

Dedicated to the memory of President John F. Kennedy, *Kaddish* received its world premiere on 10 December 1963 in Tel Aviv, with Bernstein at the helm of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra; the American debut followed on 10 January 1964, with Charles Munch conducting. In Tel Aviv, noted Israeli stage actress Hanna Rovina assumed the role of the enraged narrator; however, for the subsequent American premiere, actress Felicia Bernstein would deliver her husband's narration.

* * *

To better understand the significance of *Kaddish* within Bernstein's opus, it is necessary to explore Bernstein's complicated relationship to modernism. By 6 November 1973—the day Leonard Bernstein took the stage for "The Twentieth Century Crisis," the controversial fifth installment of his famed Harvard University lectures—anyone reasonably familiar with his musical ideology could not have been surprised by what was to come. Thirty-four years after graduating from Harvard as a relatively unknown but promising talent, Bernstein had returned as a grey-haired maestro to assume the distinguished post of Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry, projecting an image of aged wisdom as he spoke eloquently in a three-piece suit from behind a desk strewn with notes and scores. But Bernstein's words would ignite shock, controversy, and even

[11] Abe Cohen to Leonard Bernstein, September 1963, as quoted in Burton, 338.

indignation, both within the university community and the academic world at large. Simply put, Bernstein had likened the musical crisis of tonality, stemming largely from Vienna, to the prevailing human crises of the century centered in the very same area of the world. Bernstein observed that while the "innately virtuous" forces of tonality and diatonicism had ultimately triumphed over the "unnatural chaos" of Schoenbergian atonality, the story of humankind's larger perils had yet to reach its denouement.[12]

Understandably, Bernstein's brashly polemical rhetoric was met with harsh criticism. In *The Harvard Crimson*, then-student James Gleick expressed annoyance at Bernstein for his criticism of Theodor Adorno's blind adoration of Schoenberg: "Bernstein...suffers from the same dogmatism…His failure is a failure to listen to the music on its own terms. He imposes his tonal expectations on works that have a different internal logic."[13] Chief music critic of the *New York Times* Anthony Tommasini later recalled that his composition teachers at Yale in the 1970s "seethed at the thought of [Bernstein's] Norton Lectures,"[14] echoing Michael Steinberg's contemporaneous review in the same periodical. Steinberg charged that only "two fragmentary examples of [Schoenberg's] music were inadequately played at the piano," concluding with a rather dismissive assessment of the overall event: "That it was good theater, a spectacular and generous entertainment is not in question. That it was the cultural or intellectual event

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[12] Leonard Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976). Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[13] James Gleick, "Whither Bernstein?" *Harvard Crimson*, 1 January 1975, <http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=120502>, accessed 2 Nov. 2008. Gleick graduated from Harvard with a degree in English and linguistics before going on to become an editor for the *New York Times* and a Pulitzer Prize-nominated author.

[14] Anthony Tommasini, "When Bernstein Saw the Future," *New York Times*, 22 July 1988, E1-E2. Tommasini implies that his professors were irritated by Bernstein's attitude toward serialism.

that some heavy breathers around Cambridge have hyped it into is enormously in doubt."[15]

Indeed, Bernstein seemed to relish the opportunity to dissent against the academic reverence of twelve-tone composition on a global podium; he was fully aware that his lectures would be subsequently broadcast on network television, a milestone in the history of the longstanding Charles Eliot Norton lecture series. Bernstein, however, was a man of extremes, dichotomies, and unexplainable perplexities, and his relationship to the twelve-tone system is no exception. He himself had employed serial techniques to varying degrees in a number of his most substantial works, including *Candide* (1956); *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers*, *Players and Dancers* (1971); *Songfest* (1977); Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety* (1949); and most notably, in his Symphony no. 3, *Kaddish* (1963). Certainly, many of these efforts could be labeled as musical experiments by a composer with an encyclopedic knowledge of the canon, including the music of the Expressionists he so often condemned. Or perhaps, always insecure about his eventual place in history, Bernstein needed to prove to himself that he could write twelve-tone music as competently as the next composer.[16] That this ardent critic of serialism has left us with a varied portfolio of works that featured his own idiosyncratic manipulation of rows, though, is nonetheless striking.

To understand the composer's intentions, one must examine the underlying themes and musical influences of *Kaddish*, a work that stands as the pinnacle of the composer's

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[15] Michael Steinberg, "The Journey of Bernstein from Chopin to Chomsky," *New York Times*, 16 December 1973.

[16] Rather than being known as a "serious" composer of concert music, Bernstein feared he would only come to be known as the composer of *West Side Story*; however illustrious such a legacy would be, he had long harbored hopes of writing canonical orchestra works, in addition to being the one to finally write the "Great American Opera."

efforts as a serialist within the historical framework of his antagonistic relationship with the system throughout his varied musical endeavors. Bernstein relied, as he put it, on the language of "Schoenbergian" Expressionism for his monumental final symphony, conceding that it was otherwise impossible to communicate effectively with his audience.[17] It might further be argued that Bernstein used Schoenberg's own unsettling response to the Holocaust, *A Survivor from Warsaw,* op. 46, as an artistic precedent for *Kaddish*, a thesis clearly at odds with the accepted view that Bernstein's was insincere as a serialist.[18] While the dodecaphony employed in *Kaddish* ultimately surrenders to tonality as anger gives way to acceptance, Bernstein's employment of serialism in the work is painfully heartfelt and reflects a degree of respect toward a system with which he may have felt more capable of articulating emotions that seemed incommunicable solely through diatonicism.

"Fare-thee-well": Bernstein Takes on the Serialists

"All twentieth-century composers," Bernstein once observed, "can…be divided into two camps: the atonalists, who believe tonality to be a dead duck, as against all the

[17] Bernstein expressed his need to utilize "Schoenbergian" Expressionist compositional techniques in *Kaddish*, arguing that the "agony" of the text could not be fully realized in any other fashion; he also wished to bring about a more dramatic resolution of the musical tension in his ultimate return to functional tonality. For more of this interview, see Peter Rosen, *Reflections: Leonard Bernstein*, BBC Television Documentary, 1978. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[18] Biographer Joan Peyser notes that Bernstein "trivialized" dodecaphony by contrasting its language with "a joyous tonal one" to dramatic ends. Joan Peyser, *Bernstein: A Biography* (New York: Beech Tree Press, 1987), 344. Humphrey Burton, whose biography of Bernstein is by far the most comprehensive, also seems to imply that Bernstein has utilized serialism in a somewhat disparaging fashion, describing what he calls a "spiritual journey in words and music from darkness to light, from wild dissonance without a key center to a calm and peaceful F major." Burton, 339.

others, who are struggling to preserve tonality at all costs."[19] While such binary thinking may seem in line with Bernstein's typical polemics, some scholars contend that it was the so-called modernists themselves who insisted on such a divide. In his examination of American maverick composers, Michael Broyles argues:

> Testimony is overwhelming that composers who did not wish to write serial music felt intimidated and thwarted in their careers, be in positions in academia, prizes, or performances. As a consequence almost every major composer who came of age from the late 1950s to the '70s felt compelled to at least attempt serialism, regardless of leanings or preferences…While the atonalists never took over the academy completely, in their zeal they portrayed their vision as the only true one. The result was to cast doubt over anyone who was not one of them…Either write music the public wanted or music that proved its worth, either write the music of the future or the music of the past. To this binary dialectic the traditionalists had no defense, other than to continue to compose, and to get their pieces performed.[20]

However, Bernstein did have a defense: his pulpit as a conductor and international celebrity, which he utilized whenever possible. He and others who followed his ideology represented the opposite end of the extreme Broyles describes, placing themselves in direct opposition to the atonal school and vowing to uphold tonality. Throughout his long career, Bernstein consistently revered Schoenberg's tonal efforts and berated or ignored the rest of his catalogue. At best, Bernstein fought alongside tonality by snubbing Schoenberg; at worst, he spoke of the Austrian master with condescension that bordered on contempt.

Despite having one of the most distinguished conducting careers in history to his credit, Bernstein seldom led performances of serial or strictly atonal compositions, either in live concerts or recording sessions. In a mammoth discography that spanned nearly

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[19] Leonard Bernstein, *The Joy of Music*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954 (New edition, Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 2004), 214. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[20] Michael Broyles, *Mavericks and Other Traditions in American Music* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 172-173.

half a century, the conductor never once recorded a Schoenberg work; only two compositions by Alban Berg, Three Orchestral Pieces, op. 6, and the Violin Concerto; and two Anton Webern works, Symphony, op. 21, and *Six Pieces*, op. 6. Finding merit in the frequent tonal implications of Berg's rows, Bernstein conveyed far more enthusiasm for the composer's works than those of Schonberg. Though the focus will remain on Schoenberg for the purpose of this comparison, there is compelling evidence that Bernstein drew upon Bergian dodecaphonic models in *Kaddish*. A striking number of commonalities exist between the work and Berg's Violin Concerto and *Lulu*.[21] Bernstein consistently praised Berg for his employment of tonal constructs, often complimenting the Violin Concerto specifically in his public lectures.[22] Like this work, the first row in *Kaddish* begins with a minor triad comprised of the notes G, B-flat, D.[23]

These instances aside, a thorough examination of Bernstein's discography reveals his overwhelming preference for tonal, canonical repertoire and modern music with at least some sense of tonal center.[24] Bernstein nonetheless conducted unsuccessful premieres of two Copland works written especially for the New York Philharmonic that

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[21] For more information on Berg's influence on *Kaddish*, see David Schiller, *Bloch, Schoenberg, and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music* (New York: Oxford, 2003). Schiller uses Bernstein's *The Unanswered Question* as a springboard for his argument, referencing a quotation in which Bernstein praises Berg for constructing a row with "tonal implications." Bernstein goes on to commend Berg for creating an aggregate which he can later manipulate using mathematical procedures, a method commonly used by twelve-tone composers to generate musical material. For more information on Berg's usage of this technique, see David Headlam, "The Derivation of Rows in Lulu," *Perspectives of New Music* 24:1 (1985), 198-233. Both of the aforementioned Bergian devices are utilized to varying degrees in *Kaddish* and suggest a certain level of respect for Schoenberg's disciple on the part of its composer.

[22] Upon concluding an audio excerpt of the work during his Charles Eliot Norton Lectures in 1973, Bernstein lamented that it was "a sin to break into this celestial vision." Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[23] Scott Murphy, "Bernstein 'quasi' Berg: Techniques of Twelve-Tone Ordering in the 'Kaddish' Symphony," College Music Society Great Plains Conference, Kansas City, MO, April 2009.

[24] "Discography," Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc., <http://www.leonardbernstein.com/disc.htm>, accessed 30 October 2008. Bernstein did record a select few serial works by other composers, including Luigi Dallapiccola's *Tartiniana for Violin and Orchestra* and Pierre Boulez's *Improvisations sur Mallarmé I from Pli selon pli*.

utilized serial techniques: *Connotations* (1962) and *Inscape* (1967), the latter being especially poorly received by critics. Some years later, Bernstein reflected on the debut of *Inscape*, recalling the disastrous effect it had upon the composer and implying that Copland's attempts at twelve-tone composition had signaled the end of his productivity:

> After the war, Schoenberg syndrome took hold and was heartily embraced by the young, who gradually stopped flocking to Aaron. The effect on him—and therefore on American music—was heartbreaking. He is, after all, one of the most important composers of our century…Aaron's music has always contained the basic values of art, not the least of which is communicativeness…As these virtues became unfashionable, so did Aaron's music. One of the sadnesses I recall in recent years occurred at the premiere of his *Inscape*, when he said to me, "Do you realize there isn't one composer here, there isn't one musician who seems to be at all interested in this piece—a brand new piece I've labored over?" The truth is that when the musical winds blew past him, he tried to catch up—with 12-tone music—just as it too was becoming old-fashioned to the young.[25]

While Bernstein was no doubt sincerely saddened that his dear friend, one of America's most enduring musical icons, had almost entirely ceased composing in his later years, one can still detect a hint of gloating in Bernstein's assertion that dodecaphony was all but obsolete by the 1970s, a sentiment that would seep into his Norton lectures and other televised addresses to the public.

When he was approached by Schoenberg (through an intermediary) to conduct one of his works at the Boston Symphony in honor of his seventieth birthday, Bernstein chose *Verklärte Nacht* (1899), a significant early work paying homage to the nineteenth-century German chromaticists that Schoenberg had so revered in his theoretical writings.[26] Bernstein returned to the work over the years as a springboard for his pedagogical critiques of the composer, as in the case of his 13 January 1957 CBS telecast, "Introduction to Modern Music." While Bernstein was never short on praise for

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[25] Leonard Bernstein, "Aaron Copland: An Intimate Sketch," *High Fidelity* 20:11 (November 1970), 55.
[26] Leonard Bernstein to Serge Koussevitzky, August 1944, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 33, Folder 2. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

the "beautiful stuff" that comprised Schoenberg's early work as a pseudo-Wagnerian tonalist, he frequently demeaned Schonberg's serial works, or in this case, the freely atonal *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912).[27] On national television, Bernstein observed that the "weird song cycle" never failed to "[leave him] feeling a little bit sick."[28] Defining *Sprechstimme* as "part singing, part speaking, part moaning," he jabbed that "somewhere in the middle of this piece you have a great desire to run and open a window, breathe in a lungful of healthy, clean air."[29] In the context of a discussion of twentieth-century music aimed at introducing Schoenberg to the general public, such divisive remarks further distanced Bernstein from the avant-garde musical culture in the United States.

Even before taking the airwaves, and long before his Harvard lectures, Bernstein had not minced words when he stood before an audience of academics interspersed with enthused Bostonians at Brandeis University in 1952 and "lambasted atonalism to a fare-thee-well," according to one onlooker. Martin Bookspan, who would later serve as the announcer at Lincoln Center alongside the conductor during the era of his *Young People's Concerts,* charged that the outspoken Bernstein had not lived up to his responsibility and integrity as a respected public figure, and more specifically, as a Jew. "Many of us [Jews] see in you the realization of a lot of our own dreams," Bookspan pleaded, "and whether you know it or not—and I think you must—your words carry a tremendous influence. Double that influence in spades for last night's [Jewish] audience! Hence you have what amounts to a kind of sacred responsibility not only to the whole art of music itself, but equally important, to yourself and your audience." Although

[27] Bernstein praised Schoenberg's early tonal works in this particular lecture before going on to criticize his later compositions.
[28] Bernstein, *The Joy of Music,* 215. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[29] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Bernstein had admitted he was joking afterwards, the effect of his commentary upon the audience, in Bookspan's eyes, remained unchanged: they would no longer retain an open mind upon seeing the name of Schoenberg or Berg upon a concert program. Bookspan had one important question for the defiant Bernstein: "[If]…the system is so alien to your own nature, how can you explain your use of a twelve-tone row at the start of Part II of 'The Age of Anxiety?'"[30]

Perhaps it is unsurprising that Bernstein never really addressed this last question, which my analysis attempts to answer only in part. Over a decade before *Kaddish*, Bookspan had already taken note of the strange dichotomy between the defiant pedagogue who spoke out against atonality at every opportunity and the inquisitive composer who clearly saw some value in utilizing serialist techniques.

An Unlikely Source of Inspiration: Bernstein and *A Survivor from Warsaw*

Bernstein reached the height of his involvement with Brandeis University in 1952, when he directed the institution's inaugural arts festival, dedicated to the question of contemporary musical trends. The event has since been renamed the Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts, and deservedly so; while he was often quick to

[30] Martin Bookspan to Leonard Bernstein, 14 August 1952, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 72, Folder 18. Similarly, Gunther Schuller took Bernstein to task for omitting Webern entirely from his *Omnibus* lecture on modern music in 1957. Schuller was equally irritated by Bernstein's glib and dismissive treatment of Schoenberg's music: "I am convinced that Schönberg's music, *if* it is 'neurotic,' 'lacking in humor,' 'subjective' or what have you (and all these points are debatable), it is so because Schönberg's *personality*—and not the 12-tone system or atonality *per se*—was such as to cause this. He would have written (and did write) the same under another system. What different and opposite musical concepts & styles are possible within atonality or 12-tone is becoming increasingly obvious. By this serious omission [of Webern], therefore, you failed to present a complete picture of the 12-tone side, and thus slanted the argument considerably in one direction." Gunther Schuller to Leonard Bernstein, 14 January 1957, as quoted in Nigel Simeone, ed., *The Leonard Bernstein Letters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 358-359.

lend his name to a variety of causes in which he was minimally involved, Bernstein had labored tirelessly to ensure the success of what he knew would be an important event in the school's history. For the final day of the festival, Bernstein arranged a concert in honor of his mentor, Koussevitzky, another important figure in the early history of the Brandeis music program. With Bernstein conducting, select members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra performed a well-received program consisting of William Schuman's *Symphony for Strings*, Ben Weber's *Two Pieces for String Orchestra*, Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings,* Irving Fine's *Notturno for String and Harp*, and Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet.* Opening the event with some remarks on the works, Copland optimistically asserted that the concert offered a well-rounded representation of modern music.[31] While the decision to assemble a "modern music" concert consisting entirely of relatively conservative tonal works would certainly seem characteristic of Bernstein, he originally had something very different in mind. Though few knew it, he had lobbied rather stubbornly to end the event with a work he envisaged as a riveting conclusion: *A Survivor from Warsaw.* Though his wishes were ultimately denied by the orchestra's administrators, Bernstein's desire to conduct the work begs the question: what merits had this ardent critic of serialism seen in Schoenberg's gripping tribute to the victims of the Holocaust?

The ultimate decision to omit *A Survivor from Warsaw* from the festival's program was not, however, due to Bernstein's lack of insistence for its inclusion. As Bernstein began to embark upon the early stages of planning for the festival, he noted that its final musical performance, the Koussevitzky tribute, should be "a straight concert, but

[31] 1952 Festival of the Creative Arts, Compact Disc 1, Robert D. Farber University Archives and Special Collections, Brandeis University.

with meanings" and provide a "bangup finish" to the event.[32] Bernstein communicated that he had two Koussevitzky commissions in mind for the event, the second and most significant of these being *A Survivor from Warsaw.* Bernstein wrote to Helen Coates in January of 1952 that the work "would have a big effect" at the concert, despite apparent budgetary concerns.[33] The correspondence continues as follows:

> I have looked at the score, and have decided that it is possible to do it with a small orchestra (that is, reduced strings). It requires a narrator (and a very good one) and I had the idea that Felicia could do it wonderfully, strangely enough, since the part is very male and bully-ish. But if she is going to be in her sixth or seventh month [of pregnancy] (secret please!) it mightn't look too good. Can you suggest a narrator—dramatic, good taste, and with a good knowledge of music, the latter very important, as the score, though short, is difficult and complex.[34]

Soon after, Bernstein drafted a general plan for the festival to the Brandeis music faculty for feedback. "I would like to do the Schoenberg 'Survivor from Warsaw'; which I think would be eminently suitable," Bernstein noted.[35] He ended the typed message with a handwritten postscript, detailing the orchestration of the work, which includes a male chorus.[36] While Schoenberg had specifically scored *A Survivor from Warsaw* for a large orchestra consisting of twenty violins, six violas, six violoncellos, and six contrabasses, Bernstein argued that the work could still be performed convincingly with a reduced string section. He closed the letter with one final appeal: "I think that this work is worth a little extra sacrifice!"[37]

As planning for the festival continued, Bernstein encountered a number of

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[32] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 6 January 1952, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 14, Folder 3. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[33] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[34] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[35] Leonard Bernstein, "Notes on the General Plan," 8 January 1952, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 14, Folder 3, p. 3. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[36] In a subsequent letter to Coates on 21 January 1952, Bernstein noted that while the choral segment of the work was short, it was demanding and called for quality vocalists.
[37] Bernstein, "Notes on the General Plan." Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

obstacles in his quest to conduct *A Survivor from Warsaw*, the largest being a lack of financial resources. "I am wondering if it is worth it in expense [for a full orchestra] for just that one piece," Bernstein expressed in disappointment. "On the other hand, I feel the piece would be so apropos and well received at Brandeis that I am anxious to keep it."[38] Further, Bernstein faced objections from Olga Koussevitzky, who felt that the composition would detract from his proposed intent to honor her husband; she also argued that the work was far too depressing to be featured at such a concert.[39] Even so, Bernstein was insistent. "I find Olga's objections to the Schoenberg [work] invalid," he wrote to Coates.

> There would be no Scoenberg [*sic*] Memorial involved at all; Secondly it WAS a Koussevitzky commission—very important; and third, it has had enormous success wherever produced. It had to be repeated immediately, I am told, when it was done in Venice. And the work is not so much depressing as it is angering, and it has a very dramatic finish. I'm for it, if we can get the necessary number of men.[40]

Ultimately, of course, Bernstein relented, opting instead for a program that would require the least possible performing forces; and yet, these letters are revealing. They demonstrate that Bernstein, despite his seeming disregard for Schoenberg in public discourse, was deeply moved by what was arguably the Viennese composer's single-most Jewish utterance, which he deemed deeply suitable for a Jewish audience; that Bernstein clearly had great respect for the musical integrity of the work despite Schoenberg's use of twelve-tone techniques; lastly, they reveal that Bernstein had initially envisaged his wife in the role of Schoenberg's war-weary narrator, but felt forced to abandon the idea due to

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[38] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 21 January 1952, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 14, Folder 3. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[39] Ibid. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
[40] Leonard Bernstein to Helen Coates, 30 January 1952, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection, Box 14, Folder 3. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

the impending birth of his first child, Jamie. Felicia would later narrate the American debut of *Kaddish* in 1964. Evidence of all these facts strongly suggests that Bernstein not only knew and respected *A Survivor from Warsaw*, but that it would become a strong precedent—and perhaps the inspiration—for *Kaddish*, which shares many of the same principles of aesthetics and identity.

"While I have breath, I will sing": *A Survivor from Warsaw* and *Kaddish*

Not unlike Bernstein's *Kaddish* Symphony, *A Survivor from Warsaw* holds a curious and somewhat contentious position in Schoenberg's *oeuvre*. Easily the most politically minded work of the composer's career, it is also the most explicitly Jewish. For the first time, Schoenberg drew heavily from the Hebrew language in addition to German and English, making it his only trilingual text.[41] Over the years, reception of the work has been decidedly mixed; in fact, no other Schoenberg work seems to inspire such passionate reactions on both sides of the spectrum. Alexander Ringer poetically observes that "Arnold Schoenberg poured all his sorrow and the full measure of his Jewish pride into a unique mini-drama, a relentless crescendo from beginning to end of unmitigated horror defeated by unyielding faith,"[42] while David Schiller calls the work "a triumph of the human spirit."[43] Other scholars, however, have been harsh in their assessment of the work. Richard Taruskin argues that "were the name of its composer not surrounded by a

[41] While Schoenberg's *Kol Nidre*, op. 39 (1938) utilizes one fragment of Hebrew text, the composition is largely in English. The *Psalm 130*, "De Profundis", op. 50b (1950) is the composer's second and final work to employ a lengthy Hebrew text.
[42] Alexander Ringer, *Arnold Schoenberg: The Composer as Jew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 203.
[43] David M. Schiller, *Bloch, Schoenberg, and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 74.

historiographical aureole, were its musical idiom not safeguarded by its inscrutability…no one would ever think to program such banality alongside Beethoven's Ninth as has become fashionable."[44] Despite Adorno's known admiration for Schoenberg, his essay "Commitment" offers the most balanced critique of *A Survivor*, posing plausible reasons why the work has inspired such great discomfort over the years:

> There is something awkward and embarrassing in Schönberg's composition…it does not allow [people in Germany] to repress what they want at all costs to repress. When it is turned into an image, however, for all its harshness and discordance it is as though the embarrassment one feels before the victims were being violated. The victims are turned into works of art, tossed out to be gobbled up by the world that did them in…The aesthetic stylistic principle, and even the chorus' solemn prayer, make the unthinkable appear to have had some meaning; it becomes transfigured, something of its horror removed.[45]

Whatever one's view of *A Survivor from Warsaw*, the cantata is undeniably one of Schoenberg's most emotionally charged works. Composed in 1947, the work tells the story of a concentration camp survivor who narrowly escapes being murdered by the Nazis, fleeing to the sewers of Warsaw where he had presumably been forced to hide until the close of the war. The text focuses on the day the narrator fled the camp, and while he notes that it began like any other, events quickly turned deadly. On this particular morning, in spite of their apparent haste, the survivor's fellow prisoners did not exit their living quarters quickly enough for their Nazi captors. After being severely beaten, the group was tragically ushered to the gas chambers. Still, in one final powerful act of defiance against their sadistic captors, the men burst into a rousing chorus of the *Shema Yisrael*, a traditional Jewish prayer, as they marched to their impending deaths.

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[44] Richard Taruskin, "When A Sturdy Musical Bridge to the 21st Century," *New York Times*, 22 July 1988, H29.
[45] Theodor W. Adorno*, Notes to Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 88.

The imagery of Schoenberg's self-authored text is unmistakable in its power.[46] All at once it is heart-wrenching in its realism, shocking in its brutality, and abhorrent in the sheer disregard for human life it conveys. Yet many are moved by the tragic beauty of the brave final utterance of the very truth that seals the fate of the prisoners: their Judaism. In *A Survivor from Warsaw*, the recitation of the *Shema Yisrael* is the central event of the entire work, serving as a structural device that frames the narrator's saga. The text of the work immediately addresses the event, beginning as follows: "I cannot remember ev'rything! I must have been unconscious most of the time…I remember only the grandiose moment when they all started to sing, as if prearranged, the old prayer they had neglected for so many years—the forgotten creed!"[47] Only after the survivor finishes his account, however, does Schoenberg allow us to relive the "grandiose moment," closing the work with the singing of the prayer, jarring in a way that seeks to recreate the described event. While Schoenberg could have chosen any number of Hebrew prayers, his decision to utilize the *Shema Yisrael* is no coincidence. Perhaps the most exalted Jewish prayer, its text is a proclamation of Jewish faith: more specifically, a declaration of monotheistic belief in the God of Abraham. The text is as follows:

> Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit at home and when you walk along the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall

[46] Schoenberg claimed the text was "based partly on report which [he had] received directly or indirectly." He was perhaps purposefully vague in confirming which elements are based upon true events and which have been fictionalized. Ringer, 203.

[47] Arnold Schoenberg, "Text of A *Survivor from Warsaw*," <http://schoenberg.org/6_archiv/music/works/op/compositions_op46_text_e.htm>, accessed 4 December 2014.

> bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.[48]

An unabashed assertion of both collective Jewishness and the composer's pride in his Jewish self lies at the heart of Schoenberg's message in *A Survivor from Warsaw*. The composer depicts the pride and strength of the Jewish people, unafraid to display their faith even in the face of death. In the context of this text, the *Shema Yisrael*—and more to the point, its recitation in Hebrew—stands as a triumphant marker of Judaism and of otherness when it emerges so emphatically from the English and German used in the narration. Schoenberg skillfully draws upon the interplay between the three languages to further sharpen the cultural divide between the Jewish prisoners and their Nazi captors. With English assuming the role of neutrality, German takes on the uniform of Nazism when pitted against the larger linguistic fabric of the work; its usage is both stark and unexpected, and must have added to the unsurprisingly discomforted reception of the work in Germany that Adorno described.[49]

Politics aside, *A Survivor from Warsaw* also provides a fascinating glimpse into the composer's late compositional style. Christian Schmidt argues that Schoenberg presents the work as if it were a comparative analysis of his two most significant compositional practices: his early freely atonal period and the era of serialism that followed, in which dodecaphonic procedures were largely followed.[50] Indeed, *Survivor* is not a rigid model of serial technique. Schoenberg relies largely on hexachordal constructions, particularly the combinatorial P_0 and I_5, throughout the genesis of the work

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[48] "Shema," Judaism 101, <http://www.jewfaq.org/prayer/shema.htm>, accessed 4 December 2014.
[49] It should be noted, of course, that Schoenberg did write the work with an American audience in mind.
[50] Christian Martin Schmidt, "Schönbergs Kantate 'Ein Überlebender aus Warschau' op. 46," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 33:3 (1976), 180.

(see Figure 1), sometimes abandoning the prescribed aggregate and its variants entirely. While one might expect a clear statement of P_0 fairly early in the composition, it is only in the final choral section that Schoenberg presents a fully coherent recognizable statement of the row.[51] Amy Wlodarski argues that the composer intended this approach to serve as a dramatic musical realization of the narrator's recall of the "grandiose moment" in which his fellow prisoners broke out into song.[52] Since the narrator states that the only portion of the events he can remember clearly is the singing of the *Shema Yisrael,* "as if it were prearranged,"[53] it follows from a dramatic standpoint that the composer would opt to withhold a full, obvious statement of the prime row for this final section (measures 80-99), utilizing serialism to theatrical ends. Adding to the work's dramatic nature is the poignant delivery of the text that draws upon *Sprechstimme* to strengthen its message. *A Survivor from Warsaw* is likewise packed with programmatic symbolism, including the fragmented version of the *Shema Yisrael* foreshadowed by the horn at the narrator's first mention of "the forgotten creed" (measures 19-20), and the "stampede of horses" realized by the woodwinds (measures 71-72).

Many scholars have further observed Schoenberg's various allusions to tonal structures throughout the work. The composition belongs to a group written during his time in the United States that seemingly fall outside the bounds of categorization within the composer's output. Carl Dahlhaus contends that the music comprising Schoenberg's so-called "American period" is characterized by a "partial return to tonality" that

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[51] Schoenberg presents only a fragmented version of the prime row in the first measure of the work.
[52] Amy Lynn Wlodarski, "'An Idea Can Never Perish': Memory, the Musical Idea, and Schoenberg's A Survivor from Warsaw (1947)," *The Journal of Musicology* 24:4 (Fall 2007), 590.
[53] Wlodarski further asserts that the narrator's recollection of the prayer being sung "as if prearranged" is likely an allusion to the predetermined structures of twelve-tone composition.

corresponds with Schoenberg's use of Jewish subject matter.[54] Schoenberg had in fact studied the words and music to a vernacular Yiddish *Partizaner Lied* (partisan song) in his preparation to pen *Survivor*, entitled "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" ("Never Say There Is Only Death for You"), composed by Hirsch Glick.[55] Michael Strasser further theorizes that Schoenberg had originally intended to use this preexisting melody as the basis for the composition, proving that the work was perhaps initially being structured around a tonal musical idea.[56] Charles Heller has argued that Schoenberg drew upon Jewish musical materials, particularly a traditional setting of the *Shema Yisrael* text, for his composition.[57] Schoenberg also emphasizes the augmented triad, or trichord [0 4 8], throughout the work (see Figure 1), and as Timothy Jackson, David Schiller, and others have previously noted, he connects the motif to the Hebrew words "*Adonai Elohenu*" (Lord, our God), melodically setting the phrase to these pitches.

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[54] Carl Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and the New Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 158. Dahlhaus contends that listeners have neglected Schoenberg's late works in part due to his choice to combine serialist and tonal practices, but also due to the "strong confessional character" of the compositions of this period.

[55] Wlodarski, 585. Active in the Vilna Ghetto's artistic community, the Lithuanian composer/poet is most remembered for "Zog Nit Keynmol," which would become the anthem of the Jewish partisan movement.

[56] Michael Strasser, "'A Survivor from Warsaw' as Personal Parable," *Music and Letters* 76:1 (Feb. 1995), 52-63. Please refer to this essay for a detailed history of the work's initial conception.

[57] Charles Heller, "Traditional Jewish Material in Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*, op. 46," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 3:1 (March 1979), 69-74.

Figure 1: Matrix, Arnold Schoenberg, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, op. 46[58]

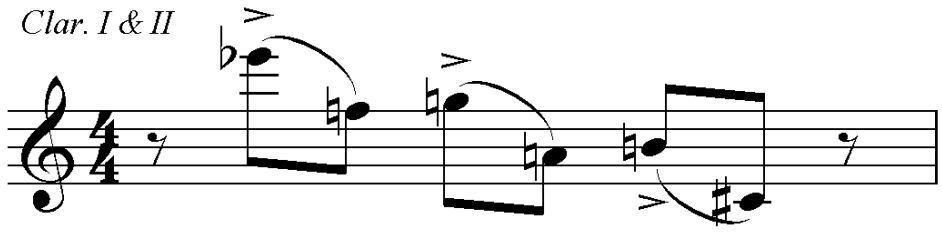
	I_0	I_1	I_6	I_2	I_{10}	I_9	I_4	I_7	I_3	I_8	I_{11}	I_5
P_0	F#	G	C	Ab	E	Eb	Bb	C#	A	D	F	B
P_{11}	F	F#	B	G	Eb	D	A	C	Ab	C#	E	Bb
P_6	C	C#	F#	D	Bb	A	E	G	Eb	Ab	B	F
P_{10}	E	F	Bb	F#	D	C#	Ab	B	G	C	Eb	A
P_2	Ab	A	D	Bb	F#	F	C	Eb	B	E	G	C#
P_3	A	Bb	Eb	B	G	F#	C#	E	C	F	Ab	D
P_8	D	Eb	Ab	E	C	B	F#	A	F	Bb	C#	G
P_5	B	C	F	C#	A	Ab	Eb	F#	D	G	Bb	E
P_9	Eb	E	A	F	C#	C	G	Bb	F#	B	D	Ab
P_4	Bb	B	E	C	Ab	G	D	F	C#	F#	A	Eb
P_1	G	Ab	C#	A	F	E	B	D	Bb	Eb	F#	C
P_7	C#	D	G	Eb	B	Bb	F	Ab	E	A	C	F#

While Schoenberg's use of a registrally displaced whole-tone scale (E-flat, F, G, A, B, C#) in the introduction may initially appear as a disparate musical gesture, it is in fact comprised of two interlocking augmented triads or [0 4 8] pitch collections: E-flat, G, B and F, A, C#. The obscured presentation of this set, appearing initially in the clarinets (see Figure 2a), likewise coincides with the confusion of the narrator himself ("I cannot remember ev'rything!"); a very similar gesture is realized by the first and second violins after the protagonist is struck on the head (measure 51), directly preceding his reiteration that he "must have been unconscious." Schoenberg continuously highlights [0

[58] Modeled on the matrix set forth by David Schiller, in which select variants of the augmented triadic construction [048] are circled. Schiller, 102.

4 8], particularly utilizing segments of P_0, P_4, P_8, I_4, I_0 and I_8, which contain a [0 4 8] set comprised of the pitch classes A-flat, C, and E in succession (see Figure 1).[59]

Figure 2a: Arnold Schoenberg, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, op. 46, m. 11



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Ultimately, Schoenberg's politically-charged outcry on behalf of the victims of the Holocaust holds a somewhat unstable position in the canon, especially in comparison to those works that are more readily susceptible to categorization within his catalogue. Regardless of its ultimate position, several items make the work particularly noteworthy in relation to Bernstein's *Kaddish*: Schoenberg's use of a distinctive ensemble comprised of orchestra, chorus, and narrator; his choice to employ a well-known Jewish prayer text to serve as a symbol of the faith and identity in a time of persecution; his programmatic usage of the whole-tone scale and constant allusions to tonal structures; and his choice to end the work with conventional serial techniques. Furthermore, with a proud assertion of Judaism at the heart of *A Survivor from Warsaw*, the work takes on an almost cathartic admission for its composer, who converted to Christianity in 1898 under coercion to

[59] For more on Schoenberg's utilization of the augmented triad, see Timothy L. Jackson, "'Your Songs Proclaim God's Return' – Arnold Schoenberg and His Jewish Faith," *International Journal of Musicology* 6 (1997), 281-317. Jackson relies on Schenkerian analytical models to support his argument; see also Schiller, 102-115.

escape persecution.[60] Finally, Schoenberg had unabashedly proclaimed his solidarity with the Jews of Europe, reestablishing his self-identification as a Jew. In this way, the work becomes an autobiographical testament of faith and identity for its composer, and, if one agrees with Schmidt, an encapsulation of his various compositional approaches. Reserving a clear statement of P_0 for the singing of the *Shema Yisrael* in the work's final moments, Schoenberg appears to attach a sense of curative resolution to dodecaphony, aligning his partial departure from serialism with the untapped emotional angst and obscured memory of the narrator.

Following Schoenberg's example, Leonard Bernstein had also explored the emotive possibilities of twelve-tone composition in *Kaddish*. In 1970, Bernstein commented on efforts to compose serial music:

> God knows I spent my whole sabbatical in 1964 in a desperate attempt at [serial composition]; I've actually thrown away more twelve-tone pieces and bits of pieces than I have written otherwise. But still I asked [Copland], "Of all people, why you—you who are so instinctive, so spontaneous? Why are you bothering with tone rows and with the rules of retrograde and inversion, and all that?' And he answered me, "Because I need more chords. I've run out of chords."[61]

The aforementioned exchange with Copland may also reveal Bernstein's own insecurities. In his struggle to produce the work, did he fear that he had "run out" of tonal musical materials when he finally began to compose *Kaddish* in 1963, eight years after its commissioning? While Bernstein took a sabbatical from his post as music director of the New York Philharmonic to devote time to composition during the 1964-65 season, he returned with only one completed work: *Chichester Psalms,* commissioned by the Dean

[60] Schoenberg was removed from his post in Berlin and forced into exile in 1933, first moving to Paris and ultimately immigrating to the United States in 1934.
[61] Bernstein, "Aaron Copland: An Intimate Sketch."

of Chichester Cathedral in Sussex and composed in the spring of 1965.[62] While the work stands among the composer's finest, it was nonetheless the only real product of what Bernstein had hoped would be a far more prolific sabbatical. Yet, in his amusing poem titled "…And What I did," Bernstein makes plain that although he had again resolved to experiment with avant-garde techniques, he had ultimately grown comfortable with his station as a tonal composer:

> These psalms are a simple and modest affair,
> Tonal and tuneful and somewhat square,
> Certain to sicken a stout like John Cager
> With its tonics and triads in E-flat major.
> But there it stands—the result of my pondering,
> Two long months of avant-garde wandering—
> My youngest child, old-fashioned and sweet.
> And he stands on his own two tonal feet.[63]

On a superficial level, the text of Bernstein's third symphony is fairly straightforward. Like Schoenberg, Bernstein utilizes a traditional Jewish prayer, the *Kaddish*, which must be recited following the death of a parent by his or her son for eleven months in accordance with *halakha* (Jewish law).[64] Bernstein chooses to alternate repetitions of the existing prayer with his own prose; the composer's text is always spoken by the narrator, with traditional prayer text sung in Aramaic and Hebrew by the chorus. The theme of the work, like so many in Bernstein's *oeuvre*, is centered on a crisis of faith. The speaker launches a series of complaints against God, voicing doubt, anger, and mistrust. After concluding the most defiant declaration in the second movement, rage is immediately replaced by despair and confusion as the narrator reveals pain and

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[62] For a detailed examination of the history and music of *Chichester Psalms*, see: Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms*, College Music Society Sourcebooks on American Music (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2010).

[63] Leonard Bernstein, "…And What I Did," in *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982). Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[64] The *Kaddish* prayer, much like *Shema Yisrael,* constitutes a public declaration of belief in the God of Abraham.

frustration at the human condition. He then repents, proclaiming a desire to embrace God and rock him to sleep. Immediately following this affirmation, a tonal soprano lullaby ensues, accompanied by a women's choir. From this point onward, the narrator contemplates the complexities of God's covenant with man with new-found acceptance, and ultimately concludes by pleading with humankind's creator to "look tenderly again" on his people.[65]

A closer examination of the libretto, however, reveals multiple layers of meaning and interpretation. One of the most widely disseminated analyses suggests that in *Kaddish*, "God the Father" actually represents Bernstein's own father, with whom he had sometimes shared a stormy relationship.[66] While certainly plausible, I think it is the least compelling (and most superficial) reading. For the purpose of this analysis, I wish to focus on the interpretation of *Kaddish* as Bernstein's embittered response to the Holocaust. Presented by means of the familiar Hasidic discourse between man and God, Bernstein attaches modern cultural and political relevancy to the age-old tradition.[67]

When Schoenberg first began to compose *Survivor*, he had relied both on Glick's song and other first and second-hand accounts to craft its imagery. In a letter to Corrine Chochem, a Russian dancer who had piqued Schoenberg's interest in composing a Holocaust-themed work, the composer wrote: "I plan to make [the work] this scene—

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[65] Leonard Bernstein, Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*, Musical Score (New York: G. Schirmer, 1963). Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[66] Joan Peyser has been particularly outspoken about this metaphor. She discusses this reading in depth in *Bernstein*: *A Biography*.

[67] Conversation between humankind and God is a tenet of Hasidic Judaism. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1810) was particularly well known for his dialogues with God; he was thought to have the ability to intercede on the behalf of other Jews, and once famously called God before a *Din Torah* (Jewish court) to account for the ills of the world. David Schiller, "'My Own Kaddish': Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3," in Jack Kugelmass, ed. *Key Texts in American Jewish Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 191.

which you describe…how the doomed Jews started singing, before going to die."[68] While not nearly as overt in *Kaddish*, Bernstein conjures a remarkably similar image that he also seems to have derived in part from personal accounts of the Holocaust: particularly, as has previously been addressed by David Schiller, Elie Wiesel's landmark work entitled *Night* (1958).[69]

Written by a concentration camp survivor, *Night* was one of the first memoirs of the Holocaust to appear in the English language in 1960 (translated from the original French).[70] The autobiographical account describes the transformation of a boyish Orthodox Jew into a disillusioned, enraged young man who abandons God amidst his struggle with the once unthinkable evils of humanity. Throughout Wiesel's account, the *Kaddish* prayer acts as a signifier of faith and eventually, the loss of that faith. Upon his arrival at Auschwitz, Wiesel chillingly recalls the scene of prisoners being chosen for the crematorium and his own fear of being selected: "Everybody around us was weeping. Someone began to recite Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I don't know whether, during the history of the Jewish people, men have ever before recited Kaddish for themselves."[71] As their time progresses in the camp, Wiesel recounts that he and his fellow prisoners slowly begin to forget to say *Kaddish*, and after witnessing even more carnage, eventually became indifferent to the ritual entirely.[72]

Flames, smoke, and ashes are powerful themes throughout *Night* as Wiesel describes adults and infants alike being burned—some dead, some alive—in the

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[68] Strasser, 52.
[69] David Schiller, "'My Own Kaddish': Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3," in *Key Texts in American Jewish Culture*, Jack Kugelmass, ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 188-189.
[70] Elie Wiesel, *Night*, translated by Marion Wiesel (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).
[71] Ibid., 33.
[72] Ibid., 77, 92.

crematorium. Wiesel later expresses anger at the continued piety of the devout, berating his God's hypocrisy: "When You were displeased by Noah's generation, You brought down the Flood…But look at these men whom You have betrayed, allowing them to be tortured, slaughtered, gassed, and burned, what do they do? They pray before you! They praise your name!"[73]

The presence of the same themes in Bernstein's symphony suggests that the composer was likely already familiar with *Night* when he began to write the text of his symphony. In fact, Bernstein was also acquainted with Wiesel and his family, sharing friendly correspondence with them over the years.[74] Just as Wiesel describes, Bernstein's narrator expresses his determination to say his own *Kaddish* in the opening of the symphony:

> I want to pray,
> I want to say *Kaddish*.
> My own *Kaddish*. There may be
> No one to say it after me.[75]

Bernstein goes on to consider the psychological torture that accompanies the knowledge that death could come at any time:

> I have so little time, as you well know.
> Is my end a minute away? An hour?
> Is there even time to consider the question?
> It could be here, while we are singing,
> That we may be stopped. Once and for all,
> Cut off in the act of praising You.
> But while I have breath, however brief,
> I will sing this final *Kaddish* for You,
> For me, and for all these I love
> Here in this sacred house.

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[73] Ibid., 68.
[74] Bernstein knew both Wiesel and his wife, with whom he corresponded. See "Correspondence," Finding Aid, Library of Congress, Leonard Bernstein Collection.
[75] Bernstein, Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish.*

As the narrator's fury increases, Bernstein also mentions the use of "fire" to destroy life, alluding to the atomic bomb, the carnage of war, and "final death," perhaps a reference to Hitler's Final Solution, or a premonition of the extinction of the human race if such genocide continues.

> And now he runs free—free to play
> With his new-found fire, avid for death,
> Voluptuous, complete and final death.

The protagonist continues, like Wiesel, to demand answers for these atrocities, likewise calling attention to the great flood of Noah and questioning God's subsequent promise to humankind as well as his own faith:

> Lord God of Hosts, I call You to account!
> You let this happen, Lord of Hosts!
> You with Your manna, Your pillar of fire!
> You ask for faith, where is Your own?
> Why have You taken away Your rainbow,
> That pretty bow You tied round Your finger
> To remind You never to forget Your promise?
> "For lo, I do set my bow in the cloud ...
> And I will look upon it, that I
> May remember my everlasting covenant ..."
> Your covenant! Your bargain with Man!
> Tin God! Your bargain is tin!
> It crumples in my hand!
> And where is faith now—Yours or mine?[76]

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[76] Ibid.

While scholars have often chosen to rely on alternate interpretations of the text that may be equally valid, Bernstein's intended reference to the Holocaust seems highly plausible. In fact, the composer would later admonish himself for neglecting to document his anguish during the years of the Second World War, which he deemed "the most traumatic and cruel period in [his] life," wondering if he had been too "traumatized, as were so many others…repressing the pain, averting the inner eye from the implications of a Holocaust after which the world could never again be the same."[77] The imagery conjured by the narrator's resolve to say his own *Kaddish* in the symphony is remarkably similar to that of *A Survivor from Warsaw*. Like the condemned prisoners in that work, Bernstein's protagonist asserts his Jewishness through the recitation of a traditional prayer and, like Schoenberg, Bernstein relies on a chorus to epitomize the practice of communal worship that lies at the core of Judaism.[78] In *Kaddish*, however, Bernstein takes a curious approach: the first *Kaddish* is sung by a mixed chorus, the second by a soprano soloist and women's choir, the third by a boys' choir, and the finale by all of the aforementioned vocal ensembles. In this way, Bernstein's approach is decidedly distanced from *halakha* or traditional Jewish law, which expressly forbids women to participate in a *minyan,* a prayer quorum comprised of ten Jews. Nonetheless, the parallels between Bernstein's aesthetic and that of Schoenberg are clear and likely not coincidental.

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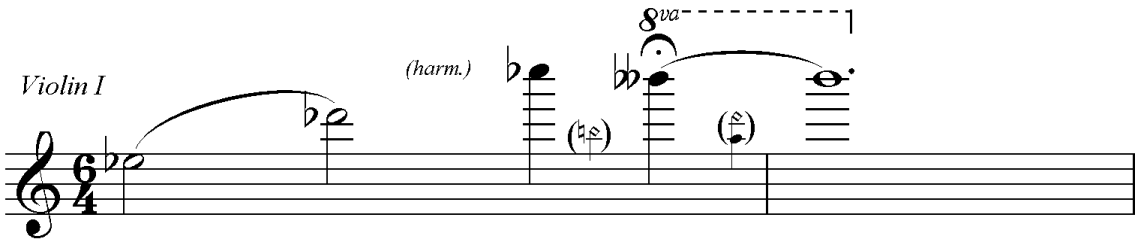
[77] Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 10. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[78] Traditionally, the *Kaddish* prayer can only be said in the presence of a *minyan.* In Orthodox Judaism, only men may be considered part of the ten comprising its quorum For an introductory guide to Jewish prayer, refer to: Hayim Halevy Donin, *To Pray as Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

Bernstein likewise uses the whole-tone scale to highlight dramatic moments throughout *Kaddish.* This whole-tone gesture, comprised of ascending sevenths and a fifteenth, first appears as the narrator expresses his desire to recite his own *Kaddish*, but stops two notes short of finishing the scale (see Figure 2b). The work is pervaded by both partial and full statements of the scale in sevenths; however, Bernstein reserves the full scale for the work's most dramatic moments, such as the choral "Amen" at rehearsal letter N, just before the narrator aggressively demands to know whether God is listening ("Did you hear that Father?).[79]

Figure 2b: Leonard Bernstein, Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*, I. Invocation, m. 4-5



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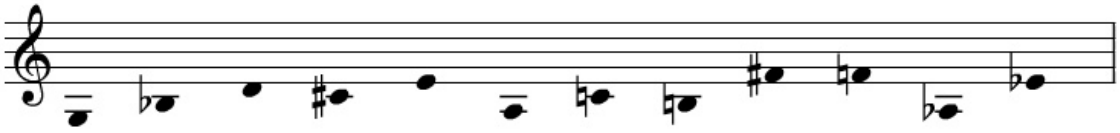
Like Schoenberg, Bernstein also exploits serialism to dramatic ends in *Kaddish*, relating the evolution of the row to the plight of the narrator. A far longer work, *Kaddish* utilizes multiple tone rows, the first of which is introduced in part one of the first movement, three measures after letter A, and takes on the greatest dramatic importance (see Figure 3). Bernstein introduces the first row forcefully in the orchestra, marking the

[79] Bernstein, Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*.

passage "Wild!" As the choir continues to sing the first of three repetition of the *Kaddish*, Bernstein utilizes the row almost exclusively horizontally, employing it as an ostinato.[80]

Figure 3: First Row, Leonard Bernstein, Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*



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Clearly, Bernstein chose to construct a row with two observable tonal implications. The first three pitches of the row comprise a G minor triad, which unfolds into full melodic statements in G minor later in the work, particularly in the finale. Further, each of the last five pitches of the row is enharmonically diatonic in the key of G-flat major. In the scherzo that introduces the third and final part of the symphony, this becomes quite significant. As the section is about to come to a close, the narrator utters the words: "Do you see how simple and peaceful it all becomes, once you believe?" At that moment, Bernstein launches into the key of G-flat major (rehearsal letter V), introducing an expansive and lyrical melody that continues to unfold as the narrator repeats the word "believe" two more times. In this regard, Bernstein allows the narrator

[80] For a detailed theoretical analysis of *Kaddish*, see Jack Gottlieb, "The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations," (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois, 1964), 119-134.

to interact directly with the music, which serves as an immediate answer to the question and reinforces the connection between the return to tonality and the narrator's return to God. While Schoenberg connects an utterance of Jewish faith with his return to the confines of serialism, Bernstein likewise connects his narrator's proclamation of faith with a return to the boundaries of tonality. In retrospect, Bernstein claimed this to be an unconscious decision:

> As the piece went through its agony towards its climax and then its gradual resolution into a reaffirmation of another kind of faith it became increasingly diatonic and it isn't just that the music became more diatonic, it's that the same music which was twelve tone evolved slowly, very, very gradually into diatonic music… this I know only by looking back it and having an objective view of the piece so that I can analyze it as a musicologist would.[81]

In both the *Kaddish* Symphony and *A Survivor from Warsaw*, faith ultimately triumphs over grief and oppression, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. Despite his apparent admiration for *Survivor*, Bernstein would never commit his own interpretation of the work to record in the studio.[82] Yet while he never said so explicitly, *Kaddish* is a musical reminder of Bernstein's respect for Schoenberg's cantata: a realization of his latent desire to explore further the compositional procedures of serialism and to connect its language with Holocaust consciousness. Bernstein had once expressed his frustration at the reaction he received from his colleagues for daring to mix twelve-tone technique with functional tonality:

> A whole group of young composers who were at the time considering themselves avant-garde artists, who had gotten wind of the fact that I had *finally* written a twelve-tone piece, came to the rehearsals in a body…They seemed terribly excited until the midpoint of the symphony when the second Kaddish, which is

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[81] *Reflections: Leonard Bernstein*. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[82] While Bernstein led a concert that included *Survivor in Warsaw* in 1989—the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Poland—it was in fact Lukas Foss who conducted the work, with Bernstein giving the opening remarks and conducting Beethoven's *Leonora Overture No. 3* (1806) and his own *Chichester Psalms* (1965).

> sung by a soprano (and which is a lullaby and is completely tonal), appeared. And they all threw up their hands in despair and said, "Oh well, there it goes. That's the end of the piece." And they didn't come to any more rehearsals as far as I know. It was that cut and dried and that simple-minded. Of course they didn't understand at all that one of the main points of the piece is that the agony expressed with the twelve-tone music has to give way—that is part of the form of the piece—to tonality and diatonicism, so that what triumphs in the end—the affirmation of faith—is tonal.[83]

While others have read Bernstein's remarks as a slap in the face of the serialists, to adopt such an interpretation is to distort Bernstein's words and risk oversimplifying the composer's intentions. While the music of *Kaddish* may have little to do with Schoenbergian serialism from an analytical standpoint, Bernstein nonetheless pays homage to Schoenberg's wishes by incorporating dodecaphony into the dramatic fabric of his own eclectic compositional language. Schoenberg himself had encouraged his students to stray from his model and express their individualism; in this way, Bernstein pays serious and thoughtful tribute to the Austrian titan, not resorting to a didactic compositional excursion into dodecaphony merely to flex his compositional muscles. Just as Bernstein sets out to mend his own crisis of faith through the narrator's thought-provoking text, he also endeavors to tackle the crisis of tonality. While diatonicism ultimately triumphs, we are nonetheless left with a curious work that is arguably the composer's most heartfelt, and certainly his most substantial experimentation in serialism.

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[83] *Reflections: Leonard Bernstein*. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

Acclaim and Assault: The Critical Controversy Surrounding *Kaddish*

More than *A Survivor from Warsaw*, *Kaddish* has ignited much criticism and controversy, and the symphony enjoys far fewer performances than Schoenberg's much shorter work. Perhaps, however, this is also in part due to Bernstein's signature eclecticism; like many of his concert works, *Kaddish* is a veritable pastiche of musical styles, an experiment that stands outside the perimeter of the composer's more commercial and familiar musical pursuits. Most significantly, however, *Kaddish* confronts an uneasy but inevitable question: how can one maintain religious faith in the face of genocide, war, and insurmountable human evil? For this reason, Bernstein faced a harsh outcry from both prominent Jews and seasoned critics in the United States in the wake of the American premiere.

Winthrop Sargeant of the *New Yorker* grumbled: "Mr. Bernstein's text purports to be the voice of humanity, or of the Jews, or of some entity larger than Mr. Bernstein himself. Still, the point of view is sufficiently individual for one to assume that it is Mr. Bernstein's own, and I doubt whether it is widely shared among the devout."[84] While Rabbi André Ungar of *Jewish Spectator* demanded that Bernstein "make up his mind whether God exists or not,"[85] *Reconstructionist* contributor Rabbi Shamai Kanter delivered a seething assessment, deeming the work an artistic flop: "Bernstein's most serious flaw is a failure of tone. Despite its weighing of the most serious themes of divinity and human faith, a consistent flippancy and cuteness mars the text."[86] Jay S.

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[84]Winthrop Sargeant, "*Kaddish*," *New Yorker,* 18 April 1964, 185.
[85] André Ungar, "The Theology of Leonard Bernstein," *Jewish Spectator* 29 (October 1964), 9-10.
[86]Shamai Kanter, "Reb Leonard Bernstein's Kaddish," *Reconstructionist,* 17 March 1967, 13-17. Bernstein's annotated copy of the article, housed in the Leonard Bernstein Collection and viewed by the

Harrison, writing for *Musical America*, remarked that while "musically…it has some soaring moments," the work's text "[borders] on sacrilegious" and that the symphony, was, "to be charitable, not very good."[87] Concerning the scolding tone of the text, which he called "embarrassing," he took the composer to task on an ideological basis: "Punishing God in an off-hand manner should not be of Mr. Bernstein's immediate concern; considering the gifts he has received from Him he should be thankful, not cranky."[88]

Ironically, while one may logically have expected *Kaddish* to face greater defiance from Israel in light of its ultra-Orthodox factions, the work was hailed a triumph, and is performed with frequency even today. Following the premiere, Menahem Avidom, writing for the *Jerusalem Post*, lauded Bernstein, whose "appearance…as conductor alone, not to mention his conducting his own work, would already fill the coffers of the [Israel Philharmonic Orchestra]."[89] Avidom observed that "the work itself possesses more theatrical elements than purely musical ones—although the latter are treated with complete mastery," also noting "the impact of the philosophical monologue of Man to God."[90] Perhaps the diasporic Jews who comprised the newly-formed state of Israel, many of whom suffered at the hands of the Holocaust, proved a more sympathetic audience to the sheer anger and defiance of the narrator, forced to question his faith in the face of horrific tragedy. As Bernstein indicated in comments published in the Boston Symphony program book, he "[felt] strongly the peculiarly Jewishness of this Man-God

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author, suggests that as he began to consider revising the symphony, he and the rabbi may have met subsequently to discuss this assessment further.

[87] Jay S. Harrison, "Jay S. Harrison covers the New York Music Scene," *Musical America* 84:5 (May 1964), 28-35.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Menahem Avidom, "Bernstein's 'Kaddish'," *The Jerusalem Post,* 13 December 1963, 6.

[90] Ibid.

relationship"—a dynamic that "allows things to be said to God which are almost inconceivable in another religion."[91]

Writing of the premiere for *Musical America*, Samuel Matalon likewise expressed a far different view of the text than those who had decried its blasphemous outrages; instead, he saw in the symphony a universal message that might have pleased Bernstein, the self-described internationalist who had often struggled to reconcile this sensibility with his devotion to Israel. Regarding the evocation of the *Kaddish* prayer, Matalon reminds his readers that "[though] the prayer is used mainly in burial ceremonies and mourning anniversaries, death is never mentioned. Rather, the glory of God and the hope for peace are stressed….Through [Bernstein's] music, a traditional prayer of one people becomes meaningful to all mankind."[92] Indeed, such reviews seem to mirror Israel's ongoing reverence of the work. Perhaps no one was more prepared to take Bernstein's rage in stride than those who resided in a nation founded on the basis of the Jews escaping widespread persecution; a land that had become a last refuge for many whom had been deeply and personally injured by unspeakable crimes before and during World War II.

Perhaps the greatest wonder of the work's reverberation with its Jewish audiences is that, after all, Bernstein's musical aesthetic borrows nothing from Jewish tradition. As Jarg Pataki emphatically concluded in his review of the concert for *Das Orchester*: "The unique product that the eternal *Wunderkind* of America has ultimately attained—namely, a Jewish musical work without Jewish music (because it has no relationship to their

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[91] Irving Kolodin, "Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish* Symphony," *Saturday Review* 47 (25 April 1964), 28.
[92] Samuel Matalon, "International: Israel/For God and Country," *Musical America* 84:2 (February 1964), 58.

traditions!)—merits particular attention!"[93] Not everyone was as impressed with the work's Jewish resonances or its music. Leo Snyder, writing for *Listen*, branded its text as "remarkably trite—a pastiche of clichés which no reader could possibly redeem," while characterizing the composition's musical themes as "studiously composed [but] pathetically banal."[94] Branding the symphony as a "pretentious failure," he questioned the reason for the positive reaction it received in Boston following the Israel premiere: "Can it be that audiences were, like some of the Boston newspapers, worshipping the cult of the man, rather than responding to and judging his music?"[95]

There were, however, critics who had a decidedly different take on the symphony, defending either the text or the music (but typically not both); others showed respect for Bernstein's audacity even if they did not particularly understand or appreciate his intentions. Writing for *Downbeat*, Donal Henahan complained that the "power [of the symphony] is weakened by a heavy current of bombast," also criticizing the "text's lapses into…pretentious emptiness." He nonetheless admitted the work's "undeniable power."[96] Although it might not have hit the mark for Henahan, he readily praised the bold new direction the composer had taken: "[Far] from being the bankruptcy of talent that some reviews have proclaimed," Henahan argues, "Bernstein's *Kaddish* is a tolerably brave step in one of several directions that U.S. music would profitably explore."[97]

Several critics, including Henahan, were perplexed by the storm of controversy surrounding the work's text merely on the basis of its alleged offense against God and

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[93] Jarg Pataki, "Konzerserie des Israel Philharmonischen Orchesters: Uraufführung der 3. Sinfonie 'Kaddish' von Leonard Bernstein," *Das Orchester* 12 (February 1964), 54-55. Translation by author.
[94] Leo Snyder, "Charles Münch conducts Premiere of Bernstein's 'Kaddish' in Boston," *Listen* (March-April 1964), 18.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Donal J. Henahan, "Comments on Classics," *Downbeat* 31:21 (29 October 1970), 40.
[97] Ibid.

religion, even if they did not consider it particularly effective. William Flanagan mused as follows in *Hi Fi/Stereo Review*: "One wonders…about those humorless souls who found the text 'irreverent' and 'sacrilegious,' for in spite of the familiar form of address, the text is distinctly yea-saying and affirmative. Its fault is not in its irreverence; it is in its lack of literary merit."[98] Flanagan, certainly not uncritical, also characterized the barrage of criticism lodged against *Kaddish* in the preceding months perhaps more elegantly than anyone had yet managed:

> It is not questioning the integrity of any critic to say that the piece was a sitting duck if ever there was one. And it got the anticipated blasting, both in public print and, even more so, by word of mouth—any mouth, even those owned by amateur critics who had not actually heard the performance, but had simply heard *about* it from a friend or from the newspaper reviews…The work has its faults, make no mistake about that. It is excessive, extroverted, and it sprawls all over the place. But that is Leonard Bernstein, and it does no good for us to wish him other than he is.[99]

As Leonard Marcus explained, echoing Matalon's sentiments in his assessment published in *High Fidelity*, however he regarded the text as being built on a "bedrock of cliché," the work contains an "undercurrent of universality," and one that had lent itself to a pastiche of musical influences. Most of all, he seemed to grasp the composer's purpose in a way that many critics had not been able or willing to do: "Bernstein's text has been condemned for blasphemy. But that, I believe, is because it has been misinterpreted as being about God. It is not. It is about man. And it is about man's agonized yearning in his struggle for a divine relationship."[100] Perhaps the Jews of Israel, whose own growth as a nation had corresponded to Bernstein's growth into mature, deliberative adulthood, were more willing to empathize with Bernstein's *Kaddish* for this

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[98] William Flanagan, "Leonard Bernstein's 'Kaddish'," *Hifi/Stereo Review* 13 (August 1964), 55-56.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Leonard Marcus, "Bernstein: *Symphony No. 3* ('Kaddish')," *High Fidelity* 14:8 (August 1964), 73-74.

very reason. For generations and for many a reason, it was a struggle they and their ancestors had themselves understood all too well.

Conclusion

"To be strong of will, but not to offend;
To be intimate with my fellow man, but not to presume;
To love, but not to be weakened by loving;
To serve music, but not to forget humanity for the music;
To work, but not to destroy oneself in working;
To rest, but not to be idle;
To be a proud and grateful American, but also to be a proud and grateful Jew;
To give, but also to receive;
To create, but also to perform;
To act, but also to dream;
To live, but also to be."

- Leonard Bernstein, "My Prayer," recited during a tribute speech to his father Samuel at the honor ceremony of the American-Israel Cultural Foundation, 1959

Like most people, Leonard Bernstein exhibited a variety of contradictions throughout his relatively long life. While he could be remarkably tender and devoted in his friendships, many of which were lifelong, he was also capable of surprising cruelty, as was the case when, in anticipation of Koussevitzky's retirement, he allegedly used the homosexuality of his friend, Dimitri Mitropoulos, to undercut him with the Boston Symphony board in an attempt to secure the reigns of the orchestra for himself.[1] Though he was a family man—a doting father who certainly felt deeply toward his wife—he was nonetheless unable to resist his urges to satiate his sexual attraction to men. He desired deeply to be a seriously regarded composer in the academic world, but was unwilling to divorce himself from the populist Broadway arena. He was a Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at his alma mater, Harvard University, but also a beloved television personality, belting "Along Comes Mary" and "I'm A Believer" from the piano alongside

[1] Quotation in epigraph used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. For more on the circumstances surrounding Bernstein's betrayal of Mitropoulos, refer to William R. Trotter, *Priest of Music: The Life of Dimitri Mitropoulos* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1995), 240-241.

Mozart and Wagner; he was not averse to drawing elegant comparisons between The Beatles and the likes of Robert Schumann and J. S. Bach for the benefit of his audiences. Politically, while he had once advocated for the worldwide destruction of all nuclear weapons at the height of the Cold War and vehemently disapproved of Vietnam, he supported certain other military campaigns utilizing heavy firepower—namely, those that contributed to Israeli geopolitical supremacy in the Middle East.

This latter contradiction was on full display in Bernstein's ostentatious response to Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, a concert that, in terms of its grandiosity and propaganda value, mirrored his famed Beersheba concert nearly twenty years before. Events took off when, on 5 June 1967, Israel launched a military strike on Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, ostensibly a preemptive defensive war born of fears that the neighboring Arab nations would band together and launch an attack. Whatever the case might have been, Israel emerged with a stronger foothold in the region than ever before, driving Jordanian forces from East Jerusalem and claiming new larger territories from each nation: the Golan Heights of Syria, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Sinai region of Egypt. Despite the tense and complex dynamic that had reigned in the region for nearly two decades since Israeli statehood, one could interpret this as a war of aggression and expansion rather than a defensive strategy. Sinai would be handed back to the Egyptians as part of the negotiations resulting in the 1978 Camp David Accords, for which American President Jimmy Carter, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat would go down in diplomatic history; the Golan Heights and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), however, continue to be occupied by Israel to this day.

The Israeli take on the evolution of these events has naturally diverged from wider international opinion, and the Six-Day War was hailed as a triumph that not only secured the continued safety of Israel, but also had led to the reunification of Jerusalem, to which the Jews believed they were divinely and historically entitled. Bernstein, apparently, subscribed to this explanation. On 1 July, he traveled to the region to conduct concerts marking the occasion in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The last of the concerts, conducted from atop Mount Scopus, was to go down in history. Producer-director Michael Minlin Jr. and his crew even followed Bernstein and his entourage around with cameras, documenting his travels, rehearsals, and the ultimate concert. Portions of the resulting footage would be used to produce the documentary *Journey to Jerusalem* (1968), which saw a limited theatrical release and was the subject of review by publications such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Bernstein was a much-loved celebrity by the late 1960s, and attaching his image and words to the events of the Six-Day War must have resonated positively with much of the public.

For the event, Bernstein chose Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, op. 64—with Isaac Stern traveling to Israel again to assume the role of soloist—and, more notably, Mahler's Symphony No. 2, *Resurrection*, with Jennie Tourel and Israeli soprano Netanya Dorat performing the mezzo-soprano and soprano solos respectively in Hebrew. Bernstein had a long-established record of relating the work to Israel. In 1947, he had dedicated a performance at the New York City Symphony to "the resurrection of Palestine,"[2] and had taken the work to Israel at the end of 1948 with the same parallels in mind. At the time, Israeli music critics had been skeptical of his comparison, deeming the

[2] Howard Taubman, "Bernstein Opens Concert Season," *New York Times* 23 September 1947, 30.

work by the converted Catholic composer-conductor to be not quite Jewish enough to merit its use for these purposes. Bernstein, who considered Mahler thoroughly Jewish—perhaps understanding the necessity of his conversion through the eyes of his own mentor Koussevitzky—did not agree, and continued to push his interpretation in the press nearly twenty years later, fighting not only for the work, but for the man with whom he had come to identify so thoroughly. "Why Mahler's Second?" Bernstein posited to the *Jerusalem Post*. "Because its theme is resurgence, and it contains so many Jewish undertones. Mahler was Jewish, you know."[3] Bernstein also recalled the days that he last conducted the work there proudly: "We had to go in armoured cars to Jerusalem then. Those were historic times."[4]

Bernstein and members of the orchestra would once again travel in armored buses to the concert area, under memorably sandy gusts of wind so powerful that they shook the heavy vehicles.[5] Among the audience of approximately 1,400 persons[6] were a sizeable number of wounded Israeli Defense Force soldiers, Israeli President Zalman Shazar, Premier Levi Eshkol as well as other cabinet members, David Ben-Gurion—who had attended Bernstein's Beersheba concert in 1948[7]—and interestingly enough, Bernstein's longtime friend, Adolph Green, yet another person close to him whom he had convinced to come to Israel.[8] A reporter for the *Jerusalem Post* painted a picture of the scene and its ambience:

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[3] "Scopus Concert Theme Resurgence, Bernstein Says," *Jerusalem Post*, 7 July 1967, 4.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Interview of the author with Yaachov Mishori, principal hornist of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, 7 August 2008.
[6] Terrence Smith, "Israel's Philharmonic Performs on Mt. Scopus under Bernstein," *New York Times*, 10 July 1967, 27.
[7] "Historic Concert on Mt. Scopus," *Jerusalem Post*, 10 July 1967, 2.
[8] Adolph Green, "Music on Mount Scopus," *New York Times*, 9 August 1967, 91.

> A capacity audience braved the strenuous ascent, the wind and the blowing sand to hear Isaac Stern as soloist in the Mendelssohn Violin Concert and Mr. Bernstein deliver a little speech in which he recalled that he had conducted the same work 19 years ago, when its theme [was] intimately associated with the time, and he felt that now it was even more appropriate. He expressed the hope that Jerusalem would become the city of peace and understanding and that from here peace would spread to the whole region and, perhaps, even to the whole world. His remarks in English, interspersed with faultless Hebrew, won him warm applause…Despite the wind and the sound of mines being detonated in the distance the performance was amazingly effective, and Leonard Bernstein's magic influence managed to raise the presentation to impressive climaxes at times.[9]

In reading this report of Bernstein's remarks, one is immediately struck by the naiveté of his belief that Jerusalem, in the aftermath of such a bloody ideological conflict resulting in the occupation of territories in three other nations—should be transformed into a city of peace. However much it today displays a breathtaking pastiche of cultures, there remains a palpable, indescribable tension in the air, with Arab, Jewish, and Christian populations segregated amongst the maze of pockets and coves of the Old City.[10]

Nevertheless, Bernstein's hopes on this occasion shed valuable light not only on these events, but even more, on the whole of his association with Israel. His interpretation of Mahler's *Resurrection* now seemed to take on a deeper spiritual meaning toward the city of Jerusalem: a place that Bernstein hoped could be delivered from its pained history and reborn into something far greater. While a portion of the funds of Bernstein's Mount Scopus concert were applied toward the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem,[11] the "majority," according to Bernstein's conversation with a *Jerusalem Post* reporter, benefited from an effort that one imagines was even closer to his heart: "a special fund to promote cultural, physical and spiritual activities among Jewish and Arab youth in

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[9] "Historic Concert on Mt. Scopus."
[10] This describes my personal experience of Jerusalem, stemming from my travels in the region in 2007 and 2008.
[11] Ibid.

Jerusalem."[12] Although one could argue that proclaiming Israeli victory from a literal mountaintop was a brazen, if not inflammatory gesture against those whom the conflict had injured—and perhaps to some degree the greater world, who certainly did not approve *en masse* of Israel's territorial conquests—Bernstein's remarks at the event itself and his hopes of how the resultant revenue would be used are powerful evidence that he viewed his actions in a different light. He needed to do so, in order to reconcile the conflict of spirit that had first shown itself in the recreated dialogue between himself and his cabin mate on his first trip to Palestine in 1947. How, could he, an advocate of multiculturalism and a political internationalist, possibly reconcile his devotion to a state that was the product of Zionism: a political movement that could potentially lend itself to both nationalism and separatism?

As discussed in Chapter Two, and exemplified by the episode at Mount Scopus, Bernstein seemed to rationalize his involvement in Israel in a way that justified continuing the relationship, even as he held to his liberal, multicultural worldview. On both socio-political and musical levels, Bernstein saw the promise of Israel to blossom into an integrated society born of both Arabs and Jews from across the world; in this way, he equated Israel's potential to that of the United States. And while his own nation was still a long way from exemplifying integration and multiculturalism, its national music had risen above the mire as a symbol of what could be achieved by the embrace of such a model: a melding of European concert music and American vernacular genres, infused with the musical traditions of Africa. The national music of the United States, then, was anything but nationalist or segregationist: holding the promise of the future, both ahead of and a product of its time. Bernstein had, from his earliest involvement, seen the potential

[12] "Scopus Concert Theme Resurgence, Bernstein Says."

for Israel to take a similar course. Perhaps this was because, as exemplified by his remarks at Mount Scopus, Bernstein believed that Israel could one day also stand as a model of togetherness and achieve a level of multiculturalism that naturally lent itself to a nation of immigrants.

However, it would be superficial to stop at the suggestion that Bernstein's involvement with Israel was entirely due to the promise of what it could become, rather than what it was. The relationship served to connect Bernstein to a vital part of himself, to his "second home" in Israel: a place that put him in touch with an ancestral history that always weighed heavily upon his shoulders. In aiding the Israel Philharmonic, Bernstein could remain loyal to the part of his Judaism that represented tradition, history, and obligation; on the other hand, his life and career as an assimilated Jew in America was somewhat antagonistic to the part of himself so dedicated to these values. In many ways, it was the struggle between these discordant realities—being a descendent of Eastern European rabbis and a modern New Jew in America—that defined Bernstein's identity.

Additionally, Bernstein was a man of many contradictions, and his attitude toward Israel was no exception. In his later years, he displayed his political misgivings concerning the direction of Israel, however subtly. In 1979, Bernstein, along with a number of prominent American Jewish supporters of Israel, published a petition read aloud in Tel Aviv at an outdoor protest against the Jewish settlement of the West Bank. They characterized the policy as one "which requires the expropriation of Arab land unrelated to Israel's security needs, and which presumes to occupy permanently a region populated by over 750,000 Palestinian Arabs," decrying it as "morally unacceptable, and

perilous for the democratic character of the Jewish state."[13] Bernstein had once seemed to call this very "democratic spirit" into question *vis-à-vis* the continued ban on Wagner's music. In a 1982 interview with Paul Laird, he further betrayed his awareness of the injustices upon which Israel had been established—and perhaps a certain degree of cynicism—when he described the founding of his own country:

> We are the most heterogeneous bunch of people ever thrown together in one so-called nation in history. It is an artificial country after all, it was started artificially. The Indians were just knocked out, everybody else came in. The best analogy to America is really Israel, which is also an artificial country, started 30-odd years ago. But at least they have this one thing in common which is, whatever it means, being Jewish. I don't know what that means, nobody knows what that means.[14]

While his activities with the Israel Philharmonic continued throughout this period of seeming concern over Israeli policy and reached a new level of intensity that had not been seen since the early years, he simultaneously displayed more political doubts about the Jewish state than ever before.[15] By now, however, Bernstein's relationship to the Israel Philharmonic was no longer just about his Jewishness or his "lower-case" Zionism, as he once characterized it. He had forged a relationship with many of the orchestra's members and indeed, the ensemble itself; together, they had participated in the making of history. The result was a deep emotional bond that transcended both the initial reasons for his involvement and his later misgivings concerning the political direction of the Jewish state. As with most of Bernstein's interpersonal relationships, once he had established a connection, he seldom let it go. Perhaps the most endearing aspect of the man's character was his loyalty and devotion to all those whom he held dear: his sentimental

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[13] Barry Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 157.
[14] Paul R. Laird, "The Influence of Aaron Copland on Leonard Bernstein," (M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1982), 94.
[15] Bernstein's last visit to Israel did not occur until 1989, a year before his death.

unwillingness to do away with even the casual relationships of his youth. Despite his personal evolution and the later state of political and even moral quandary it had produced, Bernstein had come too far with Israel; to ever let them go would have been entirely against the very fabric of who he was.

Though Bernstein was continually drawn to his roots, just as he was to Israel—the nation that granted him connection to a sense of shared past, this elusive and indefinable concept known as Jewishness that even he could never entirely reach out and touch—it was his life as an assimilated, secular Jewish American, as well as the career for which it allowed, to which he remained most dedicated. Time and time again, Bernstein willfully chose his commitments and pursuits in America over those of Israel. Though, to be sure, America came closer to supporting his political attitudes and ideals, his strong sense of identity as an American was not the only reason for this decision. From an early stage in his life, Bernstein was a man of tremendous personal ambition: a level of ambition that could not be contained by a nation of less than 1.5 million as of 1950, only approaching three million throughout the 1960s.[16] Conquering America as a conductor and musical personality would always mean more than the same in Israel, even while Bernstein remained gratified by the fervor to which he was subject during his visits to the latter. However much he loved the Israel Philharmonic, however devoted to Israel he remained, only a country as expansive as the United States could begin to hold Bernstein's dreams for his future. For that reason, above all others, Bernstein refused the directorship of the Israel Philharmonic when it was initially offered; he even had to decline it again following his rejection at the Boston Symphony. Bernstein was a man of immense talent

[16] "Population of Israel (1948-Present)," Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/Population_of_Israel.html>, accessed 10 March 2015.

and equally ample ego, always believing he was destined for greater things, even as the deeply suppressed fears that perhaps he was not up to the task made him reluctant to close the door on the overtures of the Israel Philharmonic completely.

Ultimately Bernstein was able to negotiate between the two worlds and achieve an ideal situation in which he could maintain strong ties with the nation that had seen so much potential in him from such an early date—the first country besides his own to which he had felt a deep connection from his core self, and in which he had likewise seen so much promise—as well as attain the degree of fame and prestige that he craved in the United States.

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Appendix I: Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Permissions

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Archives grants Erica K. Argyropoulos permission to quote selections from the Orchestra's correspondence with Leonard Bernstein that took place between 1945 and 1990.

These excerpts are from letters that the author consulted in the IPO Archives in 2007-08.

We further grant permission for the author to quote press releases and other documents consulted in the IPO Archives at that time.

The IPO Archives further understands that Ms. Argyropoulos has consulted materials from the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in the Library of Congress Bernstein Collection, including correspondence and other items in the Amberson Business Papers, and the IPO Archives also grants the author permission to quote these materials.

This permission applies only to the author's doctoral dissertation entitled "Conducting Culture: Leonard Bernstein, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Negotiation of Jewish-American Identity, 1947-1967," completed at the University of Kansas in May 2015.

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Archives will receive a copy of the dissertation when it is completed.

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